THE ROMANCE OF MISSIONS

# ROUND ABOUT THE TORRES STRAITS

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THE ROMANCE OF MISSIONS

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*Frontispiece.*

A NEW GUINEA VILLAGE

# ROUND ABOUT THE TORRES STRAITS

## A RECORD OF AUSTRALIAN CHURCH MISSIONS

BY THE

RT. REV. GILBERT WHITE, M.A., D.D.

BISHOP OF WILLOCHRA
(BISHOP OF CARPENTARIA, 1900–1915)

CENTRAL BOARD OF MISSIONS
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# PREFACE

I WAS asked to write this little book at very short notice, and to reply as to whether I would do so or not by cable. This explains the fact of my venturing to write about the New Guinea Mission, about which, unlike the other Missions here referred to, I had no personal knowledge save my acquaintance with, and respect for, many of the workers. Having thus no option but to perform all or none of the task assigned to me, with some misgivings I determined to do what I had been asked to the best of my ability. I had almost completed for publication a much larger work on Tropical Australia at the time that I was asked to write this book on Australian Missions, and to a limited extent the two subjects overlap. I have, however, rewritten most of the matter required specially for this book, and have deferred the publication of the larger work. In any case, the extent of the matter common to the two books is not very large. I have, with the kind permission of the authors, made use of Mrs. Benson's (Miss Synge's) "Life of the Rev. A. A. Maclaren," Bishop Newton's "In Far New Guinea," and the Bishop of North Queensland's account of his visit to New Guinea. I have also been greatly assisted by the Rev. A. K. Chignell's "An Outpost in Papua," but, owing to lack of time, I was unable to ask his permission to make use of it. I am sure he will forgive me for doing so in memory of our first meeting in the wilds. The Australian Church raises annually a considerable sum

for the Melanesian Mission, but that work was not included in the scope of this book.

The limits of space have obliged me to omit all reference to some of the most devoted workers, and in particular to the magnificent work of the women on the staff of the New Guinea Mission. Their work has been quite equal to that of the men, and they have offered themselves yet more freely. It would require a book to give any idea of their manifold activities, and of the extraordinary devotion with which they have given themselves to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

GILBERT,
Bishop of Willochra

Gladstone,
South Australia,
*Easter*, 1917.

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# ROUND ABOUT THE TORRES STRAITS

## CHAPTER I

### THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINALS

THE Australian aborigines are a standing challenge to Christian missions because they are popularly supposed to be one of the very lowest types of humanity, and to be incapable of understanding the Christian message. Professor Haeckel goes so far in one of his books as to say that they are barely one degree higher than the anthropoid ape, whoever that person may be, while the only excuse for the shocking cruelty with which they have often been treated in the past by the white settlers of Australia is to be found in the fact that many of these honestly believed that the aborigines were scarcely human, and not, therefore, entitled to human justice and consideration.

To those who have lived in daily contact with the natives, and have treated them with fairness and sympathy, these estimates of the aborigines seem amazingly and grotesquely false, and I hope to show that the aborigines of Australia are by no means, even in their natural state, to be classed among the lowest races, while they have a receptivity and capacity for accepting Christian teaching which is often startling in its effect on their life and habits; nor is the element of romance by any means lacking to these Missions of our Church.

It is possible that the ancestors of the now extinct

Tasmanians were the original inhabitants of Australia. They were a short, dark, curly-haired race. Then a superior race, akin perhaps to the Dravidians of India and the Keddahs of Ceylon, migrated to Australia, coming probably in rude canoes before the north-east monsoon. They were taller, lighter in colour, and straight-haired. They overran the country, predominating over the original inhabitants, more in the North and less in the South, but never reaching Tasmania. There is also an infusion of Malay blood in the far North (see "Two Representative Tribes of Queensland," by John Mathews; Fisher Unwin, 1910). The two leading types are still distinguishable even in the same tribe, and it has been suggested that the curious marriage laws of the aboriginals are founded on this fact of the double racial basis.

It is hard to conceive of anything more unlovely or degraded than the dirty native who hangs about the Australian bush towns, clad in the filthy cast-off garments of bush civilization, but the same native in his natural state is a very different being. His dark, chocolate-coloured body, kept clean by constant swimming in waterholes and lagoons, shines with the glow of health and good condition, and blends so naturally with the blackened tree-stumps and dark red ant-hills of the bush that many a native has escaped death, when pursued by the settlers, by the simple expedient of standing quite still and allowing the chase to sweep by within a few yards of his unnoticed figure, while the colour of the body is such that he does not *seem* to be naked even though quite unclothed.

The dwellings of the natives are very primitive, consisting usually of a few branches to keep off the wind, but it must be remembered that the white stockman has often no better shelter, sleeping perhaps 350 nights out of the year in the open air and without a tent. Occasionally in the wet season the aboriginal man will build a little platform

of saplings arched over by a sheet of bark, making his wife sit on the ground underneath him and keep a small fire going, that the smoke may drive away the mosquitoes. Occasionally a hut will be built of bark shaped like a Kaffir kraal; into this a dozen or more people will creep and close every aperture to keep out the mosquitoes, but as a general rule the aboriginal is content to sleep in the open with a small smouldering fire on either side to warm him, and by their smoke to reduce the biting night cold. He ridicules the white man's fire, which he says is so large that he cannot go near it.

No American Indian can surpass, even if he can equal, the aboriginal in his keen powers of observation, his knowledge of nature, and his skill and ingenuity in hunting. I have seen two tiny children at the top of a big forest tree pulling young parrots out of a hole. I have seen an old woman past all work tracking a lizard over ground where there seemed to be no possible trace of it. I have seen a man drive a wooden spear through the six-inch trunk of a pandanus tree at sixty yards and pierce a bird on the wing, while the feats of the "black tracker" in the way of following the old trail of a man or animal pass all belief, though I have known the white bushman do things quite as wonderful. The women make thread out of the fibre of a certain palm, and manufacture most beautifully made baskets and bags. Dr. Roth has published drawings of no less than sixty aboriginal patterns of string work, many of them of great beauty. Both men and women are distinguished by their intense love for their children. Nothing inspires them with greater terror than the fear that their children may be taken from them.

It is well known that the marriage law of the aborigines is of extraordinary intricacy, the table of persons whom a man may not marry being far longer and more complicated than that in the Prayer-Book; and although the prenuptial

rites were peculiarly vile and horrible, the marriage state was well observed on the whole in their natural condition, adultery being rare and severely punished, and any exceptions to our ideas of morality being chiefly of a legal and ritual character. A man had generally two wives, if possible, but rarely more, except sometimes in the case of the old men. These facts are the more remarkable in that in all other respects the aborigines are out and away the most advanced socialists in Australia, which is saying not a little. No aboriginal considers that anything that he has is his own. He considers that it belongs to his neighbour equally with himself, and he is ready to include even the white man as his neighbour.

Professor Spencer ("Native Tribes of Central Australia," p. 48) has some remarks on this point which are well worth quoting. "Here we may notice a criticism, frequently made with regard to the native, and that is that he is incapable of gratitude. It is undoubtedly true that the native is not in the habit of showing anything like excessive gratitude on receiving gifts from the white man, but neither does he think it necessary to express his gratitude when he receives a gift from one of his own tribe. It is necessary to put oneself into the mental attitude of the native, and then the matter is capable of being more or less explained and understood. It is with him a fixed habit to give away a part of what he has, and he neither expects the man to whom he gives a thing to express his gratitude, nor, when a native gives him anything, does he think it necessary to do so himself, for the simple reason that giving and receiving are matters of course in his everyday life; so when he receives anything from a white man he does not think it necessary to do what he neither does nor is expected to do in the case of his fellow-tribesmen. It does not occur to him that an expression of gratitude is necessary. On the other hand, he parts as a matter of course, and often for

the merest trifle (not a trifle to us only, but also to him), with objects which have cost him much labour to produce, but which a white man perhaps takes a fancy to."

The aboriginal languages, though of one general and not more than six special types, differ so much in vocabulary and inflection that each small tribe is practically unintelligible to its neighbours. It is possible that the various dialects have in time become differentiated owing partly to taboo and partly to lack of intercourse. The languages are by no means of an elementary type. The dual and several forms of the plural are found. "The verb has various forms, as *simple, reciprocal, causative, intensive* . . . infinitive. Indicative, purposive, suppositional, and imperative moods are distinguished with well-marked terminations" (Mathews, *op. cit.*, p. 214). The form also varies with the speaker and the persons addressed.

The love of music is generally considered to be a sign of intelligence, and the aboriginals are capable of developing it to a remarkable extent, though in their natural state they have nothing but a monotonous chant. Almost every Mission has a brass band which plays not from ear, but from music, with remarkable precision and genuine enthusiasm, while the singing of the chants and canticles by the native choir of the Mission Church at Trubanaman was far better than that of any other church in the diocese. It is a remarkable fact that the bands and choirs were composed of pure-blooded aboriginals, the half-castes being decidedly inferior in musical ability.

The aborigines are by nature a cheerful and happy, if careless, race, or rather they would be happy were their whole lives not darkened by the shadow of the belief in witchcraft and evil spirits. No man considers his life safe from the malpractices of his neighbour, and if he suspects anyone of plotting against him, he tries to save his own life by killing his neighbour with the utmost speed.

The way to bewitch your neighbour is simple, and always effective, if you can escape suspicion for the two or three days required for the charm to work. In Central Australia you take a small inscribed and pointed stone, and in Queensland, a piece of pointed bone about two and a half inches long, with a head made of spinifex wax, and lay it at night on the ground pointing towards your sleeping enemy. In Central Australia you wear Kadaitcha shoes made of emu feathers to confuse the trail. When the man wakes in the morning and finds the bone or stone pointing at him he believes that unless he can find the man who did it and kill him he will inevitably die, and die he invariably does by a process of what modern science would call auto-suggestion.

I knew one man, Urdell, every inch of seven feet in height, and with arms and legs to correspond. He was a mighty hunter and fighter, but good-natured and helpful, carrying logs for building our Mission twice as large as anyone else could manage. One day someone whom he had offended pointed a bone at him, and poor Urdell, in the full tide of youthful strength and health, just lay down and died in a few days, of simple fright. The same result is attained by performing incantations, which make a man believe that his liver has been extracted and the wound miraculously healed. He just lies down and dies. I spent a weary hour once in trying to persuade a man that his liver was all right, and that he need not die, but he would not believe me, and he died.

A good deal has been written on the question as to whether the aborigines have any idea of a Supreme Spirit. It is very difficult to be sure that such an idea has not somehow been derived from missionary teaching, but I am by no means convinced by the arguments of those who say that the idea of a Great Spirit is totally absent from the mind of the uninfluenced native. Mr. Mathews

FORREST RIVER NATIVES, WEST AUSTRALIA

*To face page 7*

testifies to such a belief among the two Queensland tribes with which he was acquainted (*op. cit.*, p. 169). Certainly the idea of spirits in some form is constantly present to their minds, the fear of the evil as usual predominating over their affection for the good. The spirits of the dead are apparently believed to linger round the body until it is entirely destroyed, hence it is usual to embalm the body and, after carrying it about for a time, to place it in a tree protected by a shelter of bark. A mother will constantly carry about a dead baby for a year, or even longer. The embalming is done with considerable skill, the softer parts being taken out and replaced by grass, as the natives are well aware of the danger of handling decayed flesh. The evil spirits are chiefly abroad at night, and the natives will rarely move from their place before the first light of dawn, for fear that the evil spirit should catch them.

I have tried to show that the aborigines are neither the half-animals suggested by Haeckel nor the degraded semi-humans that they have appeared to settlers whose first and only concern was to get them out of the way. An unhappy error vitiated all our relations with the aborigines from the very first. When we took possession of Australia the land was wanted for cattle, and it was let out to settlers in large runs. Undoubtedly, the support of the original owners, who in no case received any compensation, ought to have been made a first charge on the rent, and an occasional beast paid for out of this fund would have satisfied all their needs. Unfortunately, the whole of the rent went into the national pocket, and the squatter, having paid rent for the land, considered that he had an exclusive right to it. The native was told to move on, which meant to trespass on the land of another tribe. He was strictly forbidden to approach the waterholes, where alone he could get food. Whatever he did, the end was death, and so he died. Sometimes the individual settler treated him with kindness

and consideration, sometimes with callous brutality, but the end was the same, and over the greater part of Australia he died out, to the shame of the people who forgot a simple act of justice in the beginning. The wild aborigines are now only to be found in the central and northern parts of Australia, and in numbers which cannot be exactly estimated, but which may be provisionally stated at about 60,000 or 70,000.

They are a quiet and timid people, among whom the first explorers travelled without difficulty and without fear. The occasional "bloodthirsty massacres" and "ferocious crimes" which have been credited to the aborigines in later times have been usually in retaliation for outrages committed by the meaner men who followed in the tracks of the great explorers, though of course the revenge was often taken on the wrong man. It was not even pretended that the wholesale retaliatory measures taken by the white man ever attempted to punish the real perpetrators. The more religious and thoughtful people in Australia have long felt that we owed the aborigines a very considerable debt for our past treatment of them, and for the last fifteen or twenty years this sentiment has shown itself in the honest efforts made, not only by religious societies but by the Governments of the States concerned, to secure for the natives just treatment and adequate reserves, and in the liberal aid given to the work of Missions. The change of feeling is really a remarkable one, and may be illustrated by the fact that after a sermon on the aborigines in the Domain in Sydney, an offering of £2 15s. was collected for the needs of the Mitchell River Mission. I have always felt that the aboriginal was the Lazarus of Australia. Poor, ragged, and sick with sores which are the result of contact with the diseases of the white man, hungry because he has been driven from the waterholes, where alone he can obtain food, in order that the cattle may not be disturbed,

unable to defend himself against the wrongs which may be inflicted on him, he lies at the gate of Australia, so rich, so comfortable, and so well fed. It is largely due to the real if tardy efforts of the Church that the nation is slowly awaking to its duties and responsibilities in the matter.

## CHAPTER II

### YARRABAH

In August, 1892, I arranged to visit the Mission Station at Yarrabah which had been started on June 17 by the Rev. John Gribble. Mr. Gribble had been always distinguished for his keen love for the natives, and his burning indignation against those who had inflicted cruel wrongs upon them. Shortly before this time he had denounced publicly the cruel treatment of the aborigines in Western Australia, and the mob were so infuriated with him that by order of the Government he was smuggled out of the State by night under a strong police escort to save his life. No one could ever accuse Mr. Gribble of fearing the face of man. I went up from Townsville in a small coasting steamer, and Mr. Gribble was to meet me at night in a cutter between False Cape and Cape Grafton. It was a black night, and midnight before we arrived at the proposed meeting-place, and there was no sign of the cutter. Suddenly we saw the sails of a small cutter illuminated by a sheet of burning newspaper, Mr. Gribble, among whose many virtues remembrance of practical details was not included, having forgotten to bring a lamp of any kind. I got down on to the cutter and the steamer went on. We sailed about for some considerable time without being able to see anything, and without any idea of where we were going, as a compass had also been forgotten. Finally, it was decided that we were close up to the shore, and the cutter was anchored and a very crazy and leaky dinghy was got out, into which

we all packed, Mr. G. and I being accommodated with a cushion at the stern, which lifted us so high that I was afraid every moment of a capsize. Everyone had a different theory as to where the land was, and we rowed on hour after hour without coming any nearer to it. Mr. G. seemed to have no sense of discomfort, but discoursed steadily of many things. I was much less heroic, and uncomfortably conscious that the water was rising above my ankles. Finally, I got a tin and devoted myself to bailing. Fortunately, at last someone lit a fire on the shore, and we finally arrived at our destination cold and weary, to find in the morning that the cutter was anchored three miles out to sea.

Mr. G. had put up a small house and had with him one or two South Sea Island teachers, but of aborigines there was not the smallest sign. The white inhabitants of Cairns, about eleven miles away across the inlet, had told them that Mr. Gribble had come to Yarrabah for the purpose of kidnapping their children and selling them into slavery. For a time the wicked lie kept everyone far away. An incident which happened about this time will show the kind of people the natives were, and the power of the Gospel. Two young men of the Yarrabah tribe discovered that one of the old men of their tribe was arranging to have them murdered, and not liking the prospect, they took steps to counteract it. They sent a message to the Barron River tribe that if they would come over and pay them a visit they would kill an old man and give him to their visitors to eat. The Barron tribe accepted the offer, and the programme was carried out to the letter. The Barron people actually borrowed a whaleboat to go over in and carried back the dismembered body hidden under bushes in the bottom of the boat. One of the two young men afterwards joined the Mission, and in the course of time he became a very faithful and earnest Christian.

Mr. John Gribble wore himself out in his strenuous efforts to start the Mission. I found him living on porridge without milk, and on nothing else, and so poor that he could not post his letters for lack of money to buy stamps. I am afraid I reported my opinion to the management in Sydney in somewhat strong terms, but it was too late to save the founder of the Mission. Like the founder of the New Guinea Mission, he had to leave before seeing any fruit of his labours, before a single native had come to the Mission. He got as far as Sydney, where he died in the Prince Alfred Hospital, on June 3, 1894. Before he left Yarrabah he sent an earnest appeal to his son Ernest, who was working as a layman in New South Wales, to come to the rescue of the Mission. Ernest Gribble had seen so much of the hardship and suffering of the life of a missionary to the aborigines that he had vowed to have nothing to do with it, but at his father's call he gave up all his worldly prospects and began that life of devotion to the cause of the aborigines in which he has persisted with such remarkable success to this day, having now been about three years without a furlough as head of the Forest River Aboriginal Mission in Western Australia.

He landed at Yarrabah in October, 1892, and it was two months before he saw a single native. At last they began slowly to come in, and four years later he was able to report that a Mission house, church and school had been erected, and about fifteen acres of land fenced and five acres of scrub cleared for bananas, and that as many natives were coming in as they could make room for. I visited the Mission in 1896, and saw an extraordinary change. Somehow Mr. Gribble had persuaded the natives to work, and to work well and cheerfully. There were about fifty natives on the place. Four years later the numbers had grown to 150, and the Mission was developing into a well-ordered

Christian community. In order to get the people to take a greater interest in their own welfare a number of the senior men were formed into a governing body called "the Government," and in conjunction with the missionaries met monthly to decide all new work to be undertaken, to frame rules, and regulate the routine work of the settlement. A local police-court was also established. It sat fortnightly in the evening, and dealt with all disputes and offences. The native members of the court were of the greatest service in eliciting facts and assessment of penalties. An excellent brass band and a well-drilled military rifle-club were also formed. The centre of all the activities of the place was the church, and there Mr. Gribble, like an ancient patriarch, would not only lead the devotions of his large family, but issue directions of all kinds for their moral and physical well-being.

The Mission was fortunate in securing the co-operation of James Noble, whose character and example were of immense assistance to his fellow-countrymen. James was born on one of the islands at the head of the Gulf of Carpentaria, of one of the most primitive and least advanced tribes in Australia, people who lived only in a hollow in the sand, and were nearly frightened out of their wits by seeing water boil. When a boy he was taken to New South Wales and given a good education at the Scone Grammar School. I have known him for twenty years, and always accounted him a fine type of Christian gentleman. He holds the Bishop's licence as lay-reader, and he reads the service much better than many of the clergy, while his preaching is simple but eloquent. He has never despised the humblest tasks, and has twice volunteered for distant and dangerous work among his countrymen in the far-off parts of Australia. Three years ago he, with his wife Angelina, gave up a comfortable home at Yarrabah to accompany Mr. Gribble to the Forest River Mission in Western Australia.

In 1901 Archdeacon White of Muswellbrook, New South Wales, and his brother visited the Mission and were much impressed. The Archdeacon says: "All who are not engaged in necessary household or other work attend Morning and Evening Prayer in church. Of these services, I and my brother were able to attend four during our short stay. I was much struck by the reverent demeanour of all. On coming into church each knelt for a few moments in silent prayer, the men taking their places on one side, the women and girls on the other. The whole congregation rose as the choir (in surplices) and the clergyman entered. All knelt reverently at the prayers, in which all seemed to join in a monotone, assisted by the organ, and all joined in singing the canticles and in reading the psalms. I noticed that several of the elder girls followed the lessons attentively *in their own Bibles*. They all sang the Glorias, turning together to the east as they did so. In fact, there did not appear to be a voice silent, and I mentally contrasted the heartiness and reverence of the black congregation with the behaviour of many European congregations.

"The first time we attended Evensong was immediately after reaching the Mission. The bell was sounding as we reached the shore, and the service had begun before we reached the church. One native man was taking the prayers, and another read the lessons in a manner that would have shamed some of our younger clergy! At each service Mr. Gribble, in a practical manner, explains and applies any difficult passage in the lessons. On the second evening, at Mr. Gribble's request, I gave them a short address. I chose the subject of 'The Good Shepherd,' and a more attentive and appreciative congregation I never wish to have. The hymns and canticles were sung with heart and soul, and one could not help feeling that the service was a reality to those simple souls. At 9 a.m. the bell sounded for work. All hands assembled at the store,

BOYS' HOME AT YARRABAH

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except those women who were told off for household work, cooking, washing, and cleaning the houses. One band of girls and young women went off under the guidance of a 'Captain' with their hoes to work in the fields. Another band of men with hoes went to do the harder work of preparing the ground for planting. Others, with Mr. Reeves, carried saws and axes to cut down and saw trees in lengths.

"We saw them afterwards working cheerfully, clearing the banana fields or planting taro, etc. All were steadily and happily working as diligently as any Europeans, and apparently with much greater cheerfulness. Between sixty and seventy acres of heavily timbered land have been cleared and planted with bananas, pawpaws, coconuts, Indian corn, taro, sweet potatoes, yams, coffee, tapioca, and various other fruit-trees and tropical vegetables. It was amazing to see how much has been effected under Mr. Gribble's direction, by a people generally considered lazy and incapable of sustained exertion. One is inclined to exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!' That afternoon was declared a half-holiday in honour of our visit, and the whole community turned out to amuse themselves. The young men, to the number of twenty-five, went through their drill in uniform with old-fashioned rifles. Mr. Gribble was drill sergeant, and put them through their exercises—marching, counter-marching, presenting arms, etc.—as well as many volunteer squads of our own people."

In March, 1902, about ten years after my first visit, I visited the Mission to take a Confirmation for the Bishop of North Queensland. I was most deeply impressed by the reverence and devotion of the candidates, and writing to the Archbishop of Sydney, I reported as follows: "I have just returned from Yarrabah, whither I went at the request of the Bishop of North Queensland to hold a Confirmation, which he was unable to take. I was very much struck by

the wonderful advance which had been made since I was last there, some three or four years ago. There was then very much to encourage, especially among the younger generation, but now the whole character of the people seems to me to be changed. The energy, alacrity, and real interest that the men and women threw into all their work was to me marvellous. When I first visited Yarrabah, ten years ago, in the time of the Rev. J. Gribble, senior, there was not one aboriginal near the station, and now I saw a community of two hundred persons living and working together for the common good with a zeal, purpose, and continuity of effort which would put to shame many white settlements. It is not only the material progress that impressed me, the sixty acres of close cultivation, the sawmill, water supply, buildings, and organizations, because all these things might have been accomplished by intelligent direction and forced labour, although it is generally considered impossible to keep the aborigines to continued manual labour. What struck me most was the character of the men and their work, the evident interest they had in everything, their pride in their smartness, the determined persistence shown in their drills and in the heavy agricultural work, which requires constant toil to prevent retrogression, their reverence in church, and the close attention to all that was said, and the universal air of happiness and contentment.

"It is my deliberate opinion that the aboriginals at Yarrabah have shown themselves as capable of those qualities of discipline, unselfishness, self-restraint, and fixity of purpose which go to make up civilized social life as any other race. It is surely a tremendous tribute to the power of the Gospel that it has wrought such a change among a people supposed to belong to one of the lowest human types, and the wonder is deepened when we remember that a large proportion of these people have been

taken not from the primitive and unspoiled tribes, but from those who had become degraded loafers and hangers-on on the outskirts of white civilization, with all its vices and none of its virtues. The Confirmation was a most impressive ceremony, and I do not think that I was ever more struck with the intense reality of worship than in the singing of the *Te Deum*, with which the service concluded. Of course, I do not mean to say that these people have learnt in a few years to stand alone. The human means of their regeneration has been the marvellous energy, wisdom, and sympathy of the director of the Mission, and were his presence withdrawn for long it is difficult to see how the work could continue in its present efficiency. The marks of a strong paternal government are easily discernible under the wise forms of liberty; but who would expect it to be otherwise ? The Australian Church has been wonderfully fortunate in securing the devoted service of one with such a genius for the work, and it is to its shame that it is not more alive to the need of giving his work material support."

On the occasion of my next visit the collection was for the Mitchell River Mission, and fifty-three beautifully made shell necklaces were placed upon the plate to be sold for that extension of work among the aborigines. It was difficult to exaggerate the impression of peace, contentment, and happiness that was left on one's mind by a visit to Yarrabah at this time. Mr. Gribble and his helpers did a splendid work, and the Church had every reason to be proud, as it was, of the success of the work.

Trouble was, however, at hand. The Mission was asked to take charge of eighty-three natives from a Government Station on Fraser Island. The Station had not been a success; there had been an almost total absence of discipline, and the majority of the people were diseased, idle, and incapable of work, and accustomed to spend their time in

gambling. It was hoped that this unpromising material might be reformed by the Mission, but they introduced undesirable elements and greatly increased the anxieties of the staff, while adding little or nothing to the working power of the Mission. Efforts were made to induce the Government to increase the amount it contributed to the Mission, which in 1905 amounted to only 16s. per head per annum. The number of natives on the Mission amounted at this time to 360. The amount of the grant was afterwards increased, but the Government constantly sent diseased and worn out aboriginals to the Mission, so that the man power was always very small compared to the total number of persons. This has always been the great trouble from which Yarrabah has suffered. Being the most southerly of the Missions, and the most convenient of access, it has always had weak, diseased, sick, and incapable persons sent to it, often by those who wished to get rid of them after they had served their purpose, and got all they could out of them, and then the Mission has been expected to do the work that it could have done if it had had able-bodied men instead of women and children and cripples. This fact must in justice be remembered, for it governs the whole later history of Yarrabah. In fact, the mission was too successful, and achieved such a reputation that it was expected to accomplish impossibilities, and blamed for not doing so.

On January 27, 1906, Yarrabah was visited by a disastrous hurricane, thus described by Mr. Gribble: "As I write, Yarrabah presents a pitiable sight—trees, branches, and green fruits strewn everywhere, mingled with sheets of roofing iron and bits of timber. It was a fearful time for all. The gale began to blow about ten a.m., January 27, and rapidly increased in force. At midday the new building on the beach collapsed. In this building were the stores, Cole's quarters, the museum, and clothing room. Poor Cole loses all his books, etc. The wind

carried off papers and records of every description. Finding the wind increasing, we put out another anchor from the launch, but at dusk she went ashore. From three o'clock to midnight the strain was fearful, and the iron from the buildings was carried great distances. One after the other the different buildings went. Poor Reeves (since dead) lay in my bedroom, attended by Mrs. Reeves, and this building we saved by wire and ropes thrown over the roof, and all the men, with Cole, Woolrych, and self, clung to these ropes for six hours, holding the building on the piles. Once it almost went, and actually shifted bodily along the piles. The boys' dormitory is unroofed, also the hospital. The new stories are completely wrecked, and also the new Mission house, just nearing completion; the dispensary wrecked, and all the medicines destroyed; the school hall unroofed and walls blown out, also the school shed. The old Mission house is quite a wreck. The girls' home lost a portion of its roof. The only building intact is the orderly-room. The engine shed went down, and nearly all the married couples' houses. It is impossible to ride out to either Reeves' Creek or Karpa Creek (two other of the settlements), the roads being covered with trees which were blown down. At Reeves' Creek two of the houses were unroofed, also at Karpa Creek. Barka Creek has only one house left. We have not yet heard from Gorragah and Fitzroy (two other Mission settlements). What is to be done? It will need a large sum to rebuild; all the iron is practically spoilt for roofing. The launch we floated this morning. She has lost the copper sheathing, and this must be replaced immediately. In addition to the loss of our buildings, there is the damage done to the gardens and fences. Our losses apart from the buildings are great. Band instruments, stores, medicines, all gone: school material and plantations a mass of ruins. We are passing through

troublous times. The fine new building which we built with the timber from Fraser Island is a complete wreck, and is broken to splinters."

Yarrabah was rebuilt after the hurricane, and has continued to do good work. Under the present Superintendent much development work has been done, and the spiritual influence of the Mission is still widely felt.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MITCHELL RIVER MISSION

As the result of an appeal to the Queensland Government we were able in 1904 to secure for the purposes of a Church Mission to the aborigines in Northern Queensland the proclamation of a Reserve of 600 square miles at the mouth of the Mitchell River, which was at that time very little known, and entirely unsettled. The country was well watered and grassed and capable of supporting a considerable native population. Before starting the Mission I made a brief visit to the Reserve from Normanton. I was provided with a police escort, as I was informed that the natives were dangerous, a story which I did not then believe, and saw no reason to afterwards. I saw a good many of the men and some of the old women, but the younger women and the children were carefully hidden. I gave the old women some large blue bead necklaces, which were received with shrieks of delight, but as I went away I saw the men going round, and next day it was they who were wearing the necklaces. I had also a few hand mirrors, which delighted the men, who would hold them in front of me to get my face and then try to carry it away on the mirror. They were greatly disgusted when it disappeared, and would return to try the experiment again and again. I told them that we would return next year. The Rev. E. Gribble, with several companions, also came down overland and stayed about six weeks, interviewing the natives and preparing them for the starting of the Mission.

The actual expedition to found the Mitchell River Mission left Yarrabah in May, 1905, and consisted of the Rev. E. Gribble and myself, Messrs. Millar, Williams, and Field, and five aborigines. We had about thirty horses for packs and riding. It was a journey of nearly 400 miles through country which was sometimes very rough, and often without track; we could not press the heavily laden packhorses, and it took us the best part of a month to reach the Reserve. One of our party was a sailor, and he used to lag behind and then come up at a wild gallop. When asked what was the matter he replied: "It is this riding; the steering gear is all right, but the engines seem always full speed ahead or else dead slow"; and he vowed that if he had to stay till he was grey-headed, he would never go back by land. We saw little sign of the natives on the road, but on reaching the Reserve we were met by a party of about 200, who had recognized us and come to welcome us. It was a picturesque scene as we said Evensong that night surrounded by the natives seated at their little fires, with their tall spears stuck in the ground and the women and children in the background. Mr. Gribble addressed the people through an interpreter, a boy whom he had taken back with him the year before. His address ran somewhat as follows: "First the Bishop say thank you that you looked after the little house I built last year, and kept it in good order. The missionaries have kept their word. We said we would be back in six moons, and here we are. We are here to teach you about God the Great Father, who made you and the grass and trees and animals, and the women also. We are very glad to hear you have not speared any cattle since our last visit (grins of conscious virtue on the part of the audience). We do not want to make you like white men, but good black men. Still walk about, still catch possum and wallaby, still make good corroboree, but not kill cattle, not steal, not fight

another tribe, not swear, not hit wife on head with waddy (symptoms of disapproval here among the men); and wife also, she not talk-talk at her husband (sudden revival of interest in the front rows and an emphatic click of approval). When you sick you come, we make you well. We teach children read and write in school." All seemed very simple, but few men could have appealed so directly to the heart of this primitive race.

A lagoon called Trubanamando (Trubanaman for short) was chosen for the site of the Mission. The western end was about eight miles from the coast. It was about fifty yards wide, and extended inland for some miles. It was covered with the edible water-lily which forms an important item of native food. In the centre of the camp we put up a large canvas fly to serve as a church, and here on the following morning we had the first celebration of the Holy Communion on the Mission. All was very beautiful in the early morning, with the sun shining on the great blue lilies in the lagoon behind the kneeling worshippers. Some years later the church was built on the site of this fly.

I had arranged for a cutter to come down the coast from Thursday Island, about 300 miles to the north, and bring us provisions, tools, etc., to the mouth of the Mitchell River, which was about twelve miles distant. We were almost out of food, and so Mr. Gribble and I went down to the mouth of the river to meet the boat on its arrival. We had only a few handfuls of flour, but were fortunate in catching some fish. We waited four days without any sign of the cutter, and had nothing to eat but the fish we caught. The last night it rained, and we took off our clothes and sat on them till the storm was over. Mr. Gribble was ill with fever nearly all the time. Next morning we returned to the camp, and sent down another white man, Mr. Field, to watch for the boat, promising he

should be relieved in three days. One evening, hearing a report that the cutter had been seen further up the coast, Mr. Field, who was unable to get any of the blacks to accompany him, swam the river, which was about 300 yards wide, and full, not only of sharks and alligators, but of stinging jelly-fish, and walked along the beach for a distance of twelve miles in his search for the boat. Not finding it, and being without food, he returned and re-swam the river before morning. He was so exhausted that he was only just able to land. Meanwhile, we set to work to clear the scrub, and to dig up the ground for a garden with little tomahawks, which were all we had in the way of tools. We also started school with five little boys. We had no paper or slates, so we wrote ABC, etc., on the white side of a packhorse cover and taught them to sing it to the tune of "Auld lang syne." The boys went home and told their fathers and uncles that the white man had been teaching them a new corroboree called ABC, and that night we had the whole camp dancing round the flies and singing ABC to the tune of "Auld lang syne" at the top of their voices.

Meanwhile, there was no news of the cutter, and our provisions were disappearing rapidly. We got a few duck, but our cartridges were almost done, and we could only fire when there was a chance of killing several together. We were even reduced to eating the water-lily stems. Four days later I got a message that Mr. Gribble had sighted the boat just before dark. I set off in the morning for the creek, but there were no signs of a boat, then eleven miles on to the South Mitchell, where I found Mr. Gribble camped without coat or blanket or food. The boat had disappeared. I gave him my oilskin and a small piece of damper I had put in my pocket on starting. I got back in the evening after a thirty-six mile ride and one drink of muddy water. We afterwards found that our

skipper had been unable to find the South Mitchell, and had returned, being short of water. It was three weeks later before we were relieved, and then from another quarter. Each of us white men took our lonely three days' watch at the Mitchell mouth while the rest worked at clearing the ground and forming the Mission Station. In this we were readily aided by the natives, who had gathered in considerable numbers. One morning when we were at breakfast we heard a great din in the camp, and found that a fight was threatening. James Noble was the first to discover the trouble, and was on the spot before any of us. The women were shrieking and urging on the men to the fray. The protagonist on the one side was the big Urdell and on the other a man who was so angry that his mouth opened and shut like a rabbit's, while he could not utter a word. We got between the opposing parties and tried to quieten them down by laughing at them, but a good old man whom we called the King knew a better way. While their attention was distracted by us he quietly went round and, collecting all the spears, "planted" them in the bush. So the fight was perforce "off."

After about a month our plight was so serious for lack of food that I determined to break up the camp and set out for the nearest settlement, about 200 miles distant, but before we started we were relieved by the appearance of the Government ketch *Melbidir*. A report having reached Thursday Island that we had been killed and eaten by the natives, the Government kindly sent down to collect any remains, but thoughtfully put in a few bags of flour in case we were alive. I returned in the *Melbidir*, and Mr. Gribble went back to Yarrabah overland, leaving the work in charge of Mr. Millar, who was shortly afterwards succeeded by Rev. E. S. Chase, and then by the present devoted Superintendent, Mr. H. Matthews, to whose labours the great success of the Mission is largely

due. We found our cutter some 200 miles up the coast, and sent her back in charge of a competent pilot.

Hereafter for eight years I visited the Mission every year, and so was able to mark its steady growth and progress. First of all a certain number of natives were taken on at the Mission to separate them from the bad influences of camp life, small huts being built for the married people and dormitories for the young men and boys, and for the girls. The five little boys with whom the school was started grew up to be men, were baptized and confirmed, and now form the crew of the Mission ship the *Francis Pritt*, which is somewhat remarkable, as the tribe do not use canoes, even on the rivers, and never go to sea. The school has been training others, the girls learning to sew and to make their own clothes and those of the men, and as well as the boys learning to read and to write intelligent letters. Only about 130 or 140 natives are actually residing at the Mission Station, but the natives on the Reserve number over 1,000, and these are constantly visiting the Mission and coming under its influence, often leaving their children to be taught.

Some years after the Mission had been started, and when we had already resident women missionaries, the following incident occurred when I was paying my annual visit to the Mission. On the occasion of my first visit I had, when doing my three days' solitary vigil at the mouth of the Mitchell, had an interesting visit from a detachment of eighteen men of the Koko-Mindyuno tribe, who, as only two or three of them had ever seen a white man before, had swum the river and come to have a look at me. They had the reputation of being a very bloodthirsty lot, so I was rather relieved when I got rid of them without any contretemps, and later on they were induced to visit our camp. On this occasion I was having tea in our, by this time, quite civilized Station, when, happening to raise my

"FRANCIS PRITT," MISSION SHIP OF THE DIOCESE OF CARPENTARIA

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eyes, I saw a long line of dust rapidly approaching the house. Presently it resolved itself into arms, legs and spears, and was seen to be a line of fifty naked warriors in full war-paint, running and leaping and brandishing their spears. With, I confess, a certain trepidation, for we had three women workers besides the men, I asked the Superintendent what it was, and he replied a little doubtfully, "I think it is all right. They are the Koko-Mundyuno." The warriors continued their rush, leapt the fence, and then, one holding up his spear, they all gathered round him in a dense bunch, holding up their spears and uttering bloodthirsty yells. Then when they had ceased, the leader said quietly in English, "We come to church." The contrast to their formidable appearance was so great that I could scarcely repress a smile. We arranged for an outdoor service, as we had then no church, and in any case their attire was not one for church-going, and they went away quite happy. A few years later a fine church, eighty feet long, was built entirely by the people themselves, the iron for the roof being the only part that was imported. The floor was covered with bricks made on the Station, and the pulpit of a great tree-butt hollowed out and carved.

Many industries have sprung up round the Mission. A rapidly growing herd of cattle promises soon to solve the question of the financial support of the Mission if we can succeed in retaining the whole of the land granted for the Reserve. A large garden and plantations of cassava and sweet potatoes help largely to solve the food problem, though the maize crop has hitherto always been a disappointment, probably owing to the nature of the ground. Two out-stations have been started near the Mission where the natives are learning to cultivate the ground and to put in crops for their own use. These are under the charge of South Sea Island teachers, honest and trustworthy men,

though I doubt whether some of the aborigines do not exceed them in intelligence.

Now Christian couples joining the Mission are regarded as married by native custom, but are required to promise publicly to regard their union as lifelong and indissoluble. A number of the younger people have been baptized and confirmed, but it is difficult for the older people to learn.

The moral standard is remarkably high considering the conditions, and that twelve years ago all the members of the Mission were wild and primitive savages. We can fairly claim to have formed a civilized and Christian community where order, peace and goodwill are the rule, and disorder and vice the rare exceptions. The staff consists of the Superintendent and his wife, the chaplain and his wife, and two white men helpers, and one woman teacher, together with three South Sea Island teachers. The cost of the Mission, including the maintenance of the ketch *Francis Pritt*, is well under £1,000 a year, because, as in New Guinea, the workers receive only maintenance and a very small sum for pocket-money, no more indeed than the South Sea Island teachers. The fact that they are content to go on working year after year under very hard conditions of life and climate is the most convincing proof that they feel that a great work is being done through them. I was much pleased a few years ago when the Home Secretary for the State of Queensland, who had been visiting the Mission, and who was by no means indiscriminating in his approval of missionary work, said to me of his own accord: "I congratulate the Church of England on the Mitchell River Mission. It is a wonderful work; the most successful Mission that I have ever seen."

The great need of the Mission at present is two more men to open out a Mission about twenty-five miles distant, on the other end of the Reserve. The opening of this

branch at Yeremundo is a most real and pressing necessity, and without it it is very doubtful whether we shall be able to keep the Reserve for the natives. Attempts have already been made to deprive the Mission of it on the plea that we are not using it.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROPER RIVER MISSION

On Saturday, June 15, 1907, the Mission ketch *Francis Pritt* was drifting with the tide out of the harbour of Thursday Island on a somewhat adventurous voyage. The passengers consisted of the Rev. A. E. Ebbs, General Secretary of the Victorian Church Missionary Society, and myself, on our way to discover if possible a suitable site for an aboriginal Mission Station, which the Society wished to found on the Roper River, which runs into the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Our crew consisted of South Sea Island natives, with an ancient white master mariner in charge, but none of us had ever been to the Roper, and we could not get any reliable information about the river or its navigation. We drifted out to sea in a dead calm till night fell, when it began to blow, and during the next three days we had all the wind we wanted, not to say a little over.

It so happened that the Governor-General was crossing the Gulf at the same time, returning from a visit to Port Darwin, and we were amused afterwards by reading the accounts of the terrible gale through which his steamer had passed. It was wonderful to see the way in which the little vessel, skilfully steered by the Fijian mate, climbed up the huge mountains of water, and descended into the still valleys beneath. We had to take in every possible reef and run almost under bare poles. Our crew grew very despondent, as they did not believe

that there was any land on the other side of the Gulf, but on the third day, in the afternoon, I caught sight of a sea-bird, and pointing it out to the mate, he managed to pick up a small island, which gave us our bearings. We found that we had been blown about forty miles out of our course. The skipper said that there was only one chance of our making an anchorage before dark, and that was to put full sail on the boat and risk the consequences, otherwise we must go out to sea again, and beat about till morning. As the weather showed no sign of improvement, the prospect was so uninviting that we decided in favour of putting up the mainsail and travelling at a terrific rate. We got under the shelter of an island and anchored in fifteen fathoms of water just after dark. Even here the wind was still so strong that it took up a plate lying face downwards on the deck and whirled it 200 yards out to sea.

For the next two days we coasted down the side of Groote Eylandt, where we were fortunately sheltered from the storm, and anchored in a little bay at the south-west corner of the island. Two natives came off in a very primitive canoe; they understood no English, and apparently had never seen flour, but they asked for rice in Malay. Next morning we determined to land, but as I had received the strictest instructions from the authorities of the Northern Territory not to land unless we were well armed, I took a couple of the crew armed with rifles with us. When our boat got near the beach we saw the sandhills covered with a couple of hundred warriors, who were dancing and waving their spears, but when the boat reached the shore they had all disappeared except the two men who had come off to us the previous night. Seeing that they were alarmed, I left Mr. Ebbs and the two men at the boat, and by advancing alone was able to reach the two men, who were about two hundred yards from the beach.

When, however, I beckoned for my reinforcements to advance, the two men ran for their lives, and I after them. When I reached the top of the sand ridge, I could see nothing whatever but one small dog, who was going for the horizon for all he was worth. After disarming the two South Sea Islanders lest they should shoot us by mistake in their excitement, we went for a tour of exploration, and found the camp about a mile away down the beach, near a spring of fresh water, which, as so often on these coasts, rises through the sand about high-water mark. We found evidence of the visits of Malay proas, which up to this time used to come over with the beginning of the north-west monsoon, returning with the first of the south-east. Their coming is now prohibited. In the camp I found an aboriginal woman's knitting, the thread being made of kangaroo hair. We left various presents in the camp, but did not succeed in seeing any more of the natives. During the night we were rather startled by seeing a canoe stealthily approaching us, but finally discovered that it was empty, and must have drifted off the beach, to which we returned it in the morning.

About sixty miles from here we struck the mouth of the Roper River, which is difficult to find, as the bar is eight miles from shore, and only one bearing can now be obtained on the land. We were, however, fortunate in obtaining a bearing on a second clump of trees, which has since disappeared, so that we got into the channel with comparatively little difficulty. The river is navigable for small vessels for about a hundred miles, but is full of dangerous rocks and snags. Next morning we were met by the trooper stationed at the lonely Police Station at the head of navigation, who came down in his boat and brought a local native to act as pilot. There was a good deal of traffic here about thirty years ago, much of the material for the Overland Telegraph Line having been landed at

the Police Station, which was reached by a 1,000-ton vessel during a continued flood, but since that time the Police Station has been the only habitation. We saw a tribe of natives, sometimes on one bank and sometimes on the other bank of the river, and had a good deal of talk with them, one old man having travelled as far as Darwin, and speaking English more or less. I asked him how it was they were not afraid to swim across the river, which was full of alligators, as the crocodiles are here called. He replied, " Oh, that all right; when we cross river, alligator only catch him last fellow; when we cross river we always put him old woman last fellow, suppose alligator catch him old woman, no matter !" On another occasion I noticed two long hollow pelican bones, and asked him what they were for. He replied, " To carry poison in." I said, " Poison ! What do you want with poison ?" He answered, " Suppose you not like man, you mix him poison long o' tucker all same white man !"

It took us seven or eight days to reach the bar of rock which crosses the river close to the Police Station. Here Mr. Ebbs and I arranged to go out with the mounted constable to search for a good site for the proposed Mission Station. We had been recommended to examine a spot which some twenty years or more before then had been a small cattle station, but the only sign of it now left was said to be a stone chimney, and this chimney we set out to find. We continued our search for three days and traversed some very rough, mountainous country, seeing frequent fires and other traces of natives, but never actually seeing the people themselves, who kept carefully out of sight. The country became at last so rough that we had to return, and the black boy from the Police Station who was accompanying us was told to ride ahead and show the way, which, by the by, was quite unknown to him. I usually carry a compass in the bush, and saw from it

that the boy was not going in the right direction. I was not therefore at all surprised when he presently stopped and said that he was bushed. The constable flew into a furious rage and said that if I had not been there he would have pulled him from his horse and flogged him till he could not stand, adding that he could not understand why the Almighty ever created the aboriginals, because they were the most useless people on the face of the earth. When he had somewhat recovered his temper and we had got the right direction by the aid of my compass, I could not help recalling a story which he had told me the previous day about this very boy. A couple of years before he had been returning to the Police Station during a period of prolonged drought, and when he was about eighty miles from home his own horse and that of the black boy, who was accompanying him, both died. He tried to walk, but became exhausted for want of water, and lay down under a tree to die. The black boy disappeared, and, as he said, he never expected to see him again. Twenty or thirty miles further on the boy found water, brought it back to the constable, helped him along, and brought him home in safety, thus being by his own admission entirely responsible for the saving of his life. Yet he could not understand why God ever created an aboriginal!

Finally, we selected a site on the river-bank, under the red cliffs of Mount St. George. The site was in many ways an excellent one, but we did not sufficiently allow for the tremendous rise of the river in an exceptionally wet season. During the three weeks that we were on the river the weather was perfect, but we had hardly started to beat up the channel towards the bar when we were met by a violent easterly gale, which tried the skill and energy of everyone on board, as the water was like pea-soup, and we could only tell when to go about by continual casting of the lead. The storm lasted all the way across the

Gulf, until we got into the shelter of the land on the eastern side.

The *Francis Pritt* made many voyages after this to carry supplies to the newly founded Mission, and by degrees the Groote Eylandt natives were won over to friendliness. Some two or three years afterwards I attended an interesting ceremony in the drawing-room of Government House, Darwin, on the occasion of the presentation by the Administrator of the Albert Medal, conferred by the King on an aboriginal called Neighbour for conspicuous bravery. Neighbour was one of the men whom we met on the occasion of our first visit to the Roper, and he was afterwards arrested by a mounted constable on the charge of stealing cattle. It is not at all necessary to suppose that he had been personally guilty of the offence, as it is not infrequently the custom to consider any member of a tribe responsible for any act committed by another member, if the first is available and the second not easily got at. The prisoner was in chains when he arrived with the constable on the bank of a flooded river. The constable rode into the water to see if it were crossable, leaving his prisoner on the bank, when in swimming his horse rolled over, striking him on the head with his hoof, and he was washed down the middle of the stream quite unconscious. Neighbour, chained as he was, sprang into the water, swam out to the drowning man, and brought him safely to the bank. He then caught the constable's horse, and might easily have been a hundred miles away before any alarm could have been given. Instead of this, he rode in to the Police Station, about twenty miles away, and brought help for his captor.

It is pleasing to be able to record that the constable in this instance showed his gratitude by settling a sum of money for life upon his rescuer. All the Government officials of Darwin were present, as well as the Bishop

of the diocese, when the Administrator, in the King's name, presented the medal to the first pure-blooded Australian aboriginal to receive this decoration.

The Mission suffered somewhat at first from frequent changes of Superintendent, one of the most fruitful causes of failure in missionary work, but for many years the work has now been going on steadily and successfully. Some years later I paid my second visit to the Mission to introduce some new workers, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, Miss Hill, and Miss Tinney. It was not thought desirable that the ladies should attempt the voyage by the *Francis Pritt*, so we went down by a small trading steamer from Port Darwin. There was only one cabin (also the dining-room), which was handed over to the ladies, the rest of the passengers having to be content with the deck, and being well content to be still there on one or two occasions when the vessel rolled over on her beam ends. In order to reach the Roper we had to go on some hundreds of miles beyond it to the Macarthur River, and deliver our cargo there, as no one would insure a vessel going up the Roper, and therefore all her insured cargo had to be disposed of first, and passengers landed on the return journey. Altogether we had over a thousand miles to go to reach our destination, and as we were very heavily laden, and the boat leaked so much that the deck was generally several inches deep in water from the pumps, the skipper, to dodge rough weather as much as he could, used to wait patiently behind an island till the clouds rolled by. On one occasion the natives came out to us from an island in a little canoe made of a single sheet of bark. It was blowing hard, and how they managed to keep afloat was perfectly incomprehensible to us. It did not seem to matter much whether the canoe was full of water or not. The ladies excited the admiration of the rough bushmen who formed our fellow-passengers by the courage and determina-

tion with which they endured all the discomforts of the voyage.

After nearly three weeks of travelling we at last arrived at the mouth of the Roper River, but the sea on the bar was so bad that the ship nearly rolled over, dipping the boats on the davits into the water. Fortunately, the lashings held, or we, who were dashed against the boats, would have gone overboard too. We went back to Maria Island, about eleven miles off, and got shelter for the night. Next morning we had another try, and, the weather having moderated somewhat, we got in a little way, when we grounded. The Captain was fortunate to get off, and we went back to Maria Island to recover. Next morning we had another try, and sent out the mate in the boat to buoy the channel with kerosene tins. We were not able, however, to get in, and returned to Maria Island. Next morning the mate put down some kerosene tins, and we finally succeeded in getting over the bar. We received a very warm welcome at the Mission Station, which was about forty miles up the Roper River, and not far from the site we selected.

The Roper River Mission has had to contend with special difficulties owing to the fact that the natives are scattered over a very large area, and consist of many tribes. It is proposed to extend the Mission to Groote Eylandt, and also to Blue Mud Bay, about one hundred and fifty miles to the north. A pumping engine has been erected on the bank of the river, and the water, except occasionally, is fresh enough for irrigation. The chief work has been done among the young people, as the older men and women are largely fixed in their own ideas. One great trouble is the custom of betrothing girls, as soon as born, to old men. When they grow up, they naturally want to marry the young men who have grown up with them, but it is contrary to all tribal custom that

the claims of the old men should be ignored. Sometimes they have to be resisted, sometimes the girl has to be practically bought from the old man. Sometimes the young people set the old men at defiance, but this generally means a spear sooner or later.

The children attend the Mission school regularly, and have made very considerable progress, though there are sometimes unexpected interruptions. It is part of the routine that the children should bathe daily in the river, the girls opposite the station, and the boys a little higher up. On one occasion not long ago the boys saw a huge alligator rushing, contrary to their custom, along the surface of the water, towards the girls, " making the water boil," they said, " like steamer." They raised a shout of warning just in time, and the alligator had to retire disappointed. Mr. Warren, the Superintendent, took his rifle and went to look for the alligator. He got out on an overhanging tree and looked up the river and down the river and across the river, but could see no sign of the alligator. Then it suddenly struck him to look down, and he saw the head of the alligator coming out of the water for him with a rush. He dropped the muzzle of the rifle and fired without taking aim. The next day the alligator was found dead, the bullet having passed through the eye into the brain.

On my third visit I drove down overland from Darwin and spent a very happy week at the Mission, holding a series of devotional meetings for the staff. Independent testimony to the work of Missions is always satisfactory, and I therefore gladly quote, from the *Queenslander* of January 20, 1917, the following opinion of Mr. T. J. McMahon, a recent traveller through Northern Australia:

" The Roper River Mission has the distinction of being one of the most isolated Mission Stations in the wide world. Only eight years ago this Mission was founded,

and already the results are such as to encourage the Anglican Church Missionary Society of Australia, who are responsible for its foundation and support. I think I am entitled to say this, as during the last two years I have visited many of the different Missions of the Southern Hemisphere and know something of the subject. When one thinks of the extreme isolation of the Mission, the hundred and one difficulties that such isolation does bring to hamper progress, this Mission is, in my opinion, after its eight years of life, making more than ordinary progress. A special article will be written on this Mission, positive facts that cannot be denied will be given, and the people of Australia will then be able to judge of what a band of noble, self-sacrificing men and women have done, and are continuing to do, against privations and hardships that very few people can imagine possible. There is no more hopeful sign that this Mission is doing effective work than this: it has incurred the displeasure of certain people whose misdeeds of lust and exploitation are exposed by the coming and the clean, honest intentions of the Mission."

It is hoped that the Mission will soon be extended considerably. More workers are still needed.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TORRES STRAITS: MOA

The Torres Straits lie between Cape York, the northern point of Australia, and New Guinea, and through them are scattered about a dozen larger inhabited islands and innumerable small islands and coral reefs. There are not many more beautiful spots than the Torres Straits when the waves are dancing in the brilliant sunshine, which is for about nine months in the year. During the three months of the north-west monsoon they are subject to violent gales, with torrential rain alternating with brief spells of blazing heat and calm. For the rest of the year the south-east monsoon blows strongly, tempering the heat and causing the great rollers to break in miles of thundering foam on the outer edge of the coral reef. The living reef itself is a reddish-brown which blends with the bright green of the submerged banks and the purple shadows of the passing clouds on the sapphire sea into a riot of colour which I have never seen approached in any other part of the world. It is possible to land on many of the reefs at low water and to note the wonderful marine gardens of anemones, corals, and sea-plants of every imaginable hue, or to look down on the leeward side and see the great trees of seaweed rising up twenty and thirty feet from the bottom, and waving their branches in the tide, while green, blue, purple, yellow, red, and parti-coloured parrot-fish swim in and out like birds through a tree. Numerous islands are always in sight, some conical extinct volcano

peaks, some mere cays a few feet above the water. Navigation is always dangerous, owing to the fierce tides and the fact that the water is too deep to anchor in between the reefs. The usual way is to drop your anchor on the leeward part of the reef and hang on. This is all very well as long as the wind does not shift. If it does the result is apt to be disaster.

The people who inhabit these islands are more akin to the Papuans than to the aborigines. They are strong, capable, and intelligent, and live mainly by the cultivation of their gardens and plantations of coconuts, bananas, and yams. They have probably always had a strong infusion of the South Sea Island blood. Fifty years ago they had a very evil reputation for piracy and murder, and, like the Papuans, used to practise cannibalism regularly. Many a peaceful trader, anchoring too near the islands, was surrounded and sacked by the ruthless islanders. One island indeed had the temerity to attack a British man-of-war in full daylight, and obtained the name of Warrior Island in consequence.

The London Missionary Society began work among these people nearly forty years ago in connection with their work in New Guinea. They did not perhaps teach all that we, as Churchmen, should have liked them to teach, but they taught a great deal and taught it well and thoroughly. The people gradually changed. Old heathen customs and beliefs lingered here and there, and still linger, and some of the older people never really changed, but the great mass of the people not only became Christian in name, but also to a very large extent in practice. Their morality will compare not unfavourably with that of their white neighbours, their liberality and care for their Church is at least as great, and their observance of Sunday much more strict. So far as I am able to judge, the London Missionary Society succeeded in

teaching the people that Christianity meant a certain *way of life*, and that if they did not practise the way they had no right to call themselves Christians. I would that all white Christians realized it so clearly.

When I came to Thursday Island as Bishop in 1900, I confess to casting very coveteous eyes on the Torres Straits Islands. They were so near, so convenient to work from the centre of the diocese, inhabited by a people so attractive and full of interest that I wished with all my heart that we had them under our care. I felt, however, that as the London Missionary Society was first in the field and doing good work, I ought not to interfere with them in any way. I carried this so far as to abstain from even visiting the islands, lest I should be suspected of wishing to proselytize. We did, however, in one instance, depart from this principle when, in 1908, in response to a request from the Government Resident, and after full explanations to the London Missionary Society, we commenced work on Moa Island. The settlers there were not Torres Straits Islanders, but South Sea men, who had for various reasons been exempted when the rest were deported a few years before. They were mostly members of our own Church, and the London Missionary Society had not done any work among them, and so I gladly agreed to the Resident's suggestion that we should be responsible for their spiritual welfare. Here, in passing, I must testify to the enormous help given by the three successive Government Residents, Messrs. John Douglas, C.M.G., Hugh Milman, and William Lee Bryce. They all had the good of the natives at heart, and spared no trouble to secure them justice. They were all also devout communicants of the Church of England.

The settlers at Moa soon showed themselves so industrious that they used up all the available land in the Reserve allotted to them, and the Government accordingly,

SCHOOLGIRLS AT BOGA BOGA

DEACONESS BUCHANAN

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at my suggestion, increased the area to at least six times its original size. On this area they were able to support themselves by gardens and plantations.

One great trouble was that we had no teacher to send them, until, in default of an available man, Deaconess Buchanan, who had been a devoted worker for many years at Thursday Island, was sent over by Rev. J. Jones, now General Secretary of the Australian Board of Missions, who was administering the diocese during my absence at the Lambeth Conference of 1908; and for three years she lived quite alone at Moa without another white man or woman on the island. With her small frail body torn and twisted terribly as the result of a riding accident some years before, suffering agonies from continual headaches, and with a diseased foot which made all walking pain, most women would have used their small independence to secure what alleviation of their sufferings they might, but Florence Buchanan had not so learned Christ. All that she had and was was given freely to the service of God and her fellow-men, both before and after her ordination as deaconess in January, 1908, when she had been already working over ten years at Thursday Island. She soon acquired the most marvellous influence over the people at Moa, where she taught the children, nursed the sick, uplifted the women, conducted the services, and ruled the men with a gentle but iron hand.

Her face always reminded me of a medieval saint, and her character was singularly like that of Catherine of Genoa, especially in the keen brain and quiet humour. After three years I was obliged to order her away, much to her wrath, in the vain hope of saving a precious life, but the memory of her work and example will never be forgotten in Moa.

The village consisted of a long sandy street, on each side of which were houses built after the New Guinea

fashion, some feet above the ground, with walls and roof of grass. The Government consisted of two elder men called councillors, who sat with the missionary as assessor to try the not very numerous misdeeds of the community, and whose orders were executed by a native policeman. Some of the policeman's duties were unusual. At six a.m. he had to ring a bell and take down all the children to the sea for a swim, keeping his official eye on sharks and sword-fish. Later on he had to go round to all the houses and see whether the women had lighted the fire and were cooking their husbands' breakfasts. On one occasion I had a deputation of women in a high state of indignation. They did not object to the policeman coming round to see if they were getting breakfast ready, but they said they did object to his lifting the lid to see what was in the pot! They thought it an interference with the liberty of the subject to cook what she liked. I had to solemnly decree that the policeman was not henceforth to go beyond the door without a warrant.

On the second Mission festival, though it was in the wet season, I went over in the *Francis Pritt*, and in the evening we had a striking gathering. The proceedings consisted of a few words from myself and addresses by three elder men on their recollections of the conditions which prevailed before Christianity came to the Islands—" when all was dark," as they put it. First of all came old Kaio, who had caused some excitement earlier in the day by heading a little procession carrying a most realistic model, more than half life-size, of a South Sea Island bier containing a properly swathed and carefully carved and painted wooden human body, the toes projecting from the bier in gruesome fashion. This was erected on four high sticks in front of the Mission house to provide Kaio with a text. He described how, when he was a boy, every man slept weapon in hand, and to be a stranger meant to be instantly killed; how when he

came first to Moa and Badu and Maubiag, mutual suspicion and warfare reigned where now all was peace and brotherly love, and how Christian burial had superseded the many superstitious and evil rites connected with the dead. Then came Sonny, the councillor, who told us of the feuds and hatreds that prevailed in his island of Lifu when he was a boy, and of the depths of ignorance and darkness from which they had been rescued by the missionaries who came in their ship with many sails and anchored in the still lagoon "where no tide runs," and where you could see through the clear water the anchor lying on the bottom twenty fathoms below. Now, he said, the Gospel of Jesus Christ had come like dynamite and shattered all the old evil customs and killed them dead, as when dynamite is exploded in the water and kills all the fish around. Lastly came Joe Bann, who also told us of his boyhood and of the heathen tribes up-country, where it was death to wake the King, and where, if a child cried and disturbed him, it was instantly killed and eaten; and how the first missionary came and "called the King for prayers," and paid for his temerity with his life, and how now all was changed, and we were children of the light and no longer of the darkness; and how St. Paul's Mission was working for the people of Moa and filling their hearts with thankfulness. Fortunately, the rain held off during the evening, and as the full moon rose over the rocky point of the bay and shone on the young palm-trees and the brown houses of the village and the breathless, listening crowd, it was a memorable scene.

The work of the Mission went on steadily. A schoolhouse was built, and then the people said that they must have a church. I suggested a wooden building, but this met with no approval. They must have something that would last and would be for their children when they themselves were gone. They set themselves to work to

collect money, giving with great generosity. Two men were paid off from the boats on which they had been working for three years, one with £10 and the other with £8. Each brought me £2 for the church. Little by little the fund grew, and at last, by some outside help, we had enough to build a church in ferro-concrete, which satisfied their ideas of permanency. The occasion was a great one. From all the islands round came crowded boats with congratulatory visitors, for whose entertainment booths had been erected and many turtles collected. The procession to the church was impressive, but it was impossible for more than a tithe of our 400 visitors to get inside in addition to our own people. They were, however, determined that if they could not get in for the service they would at least be in for the offering, and so they came in at the west door, filed up to the altar-steps, and departed by the side door. As the representatives of each island entered, the chief man took his stand at the chancel steps with a grass bag, into which the people put their offerings. Little babies had their threepenny bits, which had been held for hours in their hot, sticky little hands, until the mothers had to seize the wrists and shake them vigorously over the bag. When the collection was added up it was found to amount to more than £52, and this, it must be remembered, was not from our own people, but mostly from the London Missionary Society islands.

Deaconess Buchanan was succeeded by a layman, Mr. Cole, and his wife, and the work went on. I used to go over from time to time to celebrate the Holy Communion, and had many proofs of the reality of the people's religious life. On one occasion a fine young fellow came to me and said, "I cannot come to Holy Communion tomorrow: I have sinned." I said, "What is it?" He replied: "A few weeks ago I landed on an uninhabited island where there was a deserted hut. I saw an old

A MAP OF TORRES STRAITS

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tomahawk on the floor and took it away. All the time in the boat I heard a voice saying to me, 'Thou shalt not steal,' and at last I could not stand it any longer. I took up the tomahawk and threw it as far as I could into the sea." I told him that he must pay the value, and I would try to find the owner. When next he came to Thursday Island he brought me 8s., far more than the value, and a big sum for him, and with great difficulty I found and gave the money to the astonished owner. On another occasion a man and his wife said they felt unworthy to come. I inquired the reason, and the man said: "We work in the gardens, and all time my wife, she growl. She say I look at another woman, but I no look, and all time she growl, so at last I swear!" I gave them a lecture, and the quarrel was composed. Human nature is much the same all the world over.

For nearly twenty-five years a daily class was held in the South Sea Island Home at Thursday Island, and to hear some of these rough sailors pray for themselves, their fellows, and their Church, was an education in the spiritual life. Whatever else they had to leave behind them when they went to sea, they would have their Bible, Prayer-Book and hymn-book, and when the day's work was over the soft music of their hymns would be heard across the water in the gathering darkness.

It was not until 1914, and just before the outbreak of the war, that the Church reaped the reward of its patience and self-restraint with regard to the Torres Straits Islands. Without any action or suggestion on our part, the London Missionary Society wrote, entirely of their own accord, to say that they were no longer able, for financial reasons, to carry on the work properly in the Torres Straits in addition to their work in New Guinea, and asking whether the Church of England would take the work over, offering at the same time to hand over all the land and buildings

without asking for any kind of compensation. I forwarded the offer to the Australian Board of Missions, as it seemed to be too big a thing for one small diocese to accept on its own responsibility, and in spite of the pressure of the war, which had now begun, it seemed to be such a clear call from God that the Church accepted it without hesitation, and I decided, before leaving Thursday Island for good, to visit all the Islands and prepare the people for the change.

As I am writing this in March, 1917, I have received a letter from the present Bishop of Carpentaria telling me of the latest stage in the growth of Moa. A missionary priest, Rev. G. A. Luscombe, had been in residence for some time, and last month the Bishop solemnly opened a small training college for teachers and clergy on Moa and admitted the first four students, Joseph Lui, Poey Passi, Aviu Ware, and Bawia. Two of these are older men, who have already received some training from the London Missionary Society. A small number of boys will also be taken as postulants. This step augurs hopefully for the future of the Mission, and is the fulfilment of the greatest wish of its first Superintendent, Deaconess Buchanan.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE ISLANDS

In April, 1915, I went round the Islands in the *Goodwill*, kindly lent to us by her captain, Rev. F. Walker, late of the London Missionary Society, whose desire to assist, and knowledge of the natives, were of incalculable value to us. The Vicar of Thursday Island, Rev. E. J. Nash, and the General Secretary of the Australian Board of Missions, Rev. J. Jones, completed our party. Both of them had the advantage of being personally known to and trusted by the natives. We stayed the night at Moa, and next morning, after a celebration of Holy Communion, at which I bade good-bye to my many friends on the island, we sailed at nine a.m. It was blowing hard, and we were all very glad to lie down on the hatch and hope for better days. After much heavy rolling we reached Yam Island at four p.m., and at once went ashore, and after greeting the people, who were awaiting us dressed in their best, we went to the church for service. Afterwards we met all the men in the schoolroom, and I described the changes that would take place, and reassured them on some points. Mr. Walker was a great help to us, and without his loyal aid matters might have gone very differently. We left again at nine p.m. It was a bad night, with squalls of rain and a head wind, and we made slow progress.

Nothing but the preternaturally sharp eyes of our native crew could have picked out the low island for which we were making, and under which we anchored uneasily in fifteen fathoms at one a.m. The weather was not much

better next day, and we did not anchor off Massig until five p.m. We landed and walked a mile through the bush to the village, which was on the other side of the island. We were again welcomed as at Yam. The church was in a grove of coconuts, and was a very resonant building, which made speaking difficult. From here we had a good passage to Darnley, where we arrived at midday. The island is high and picturesque, and the lower slopes well cultivated. We transferred our belongings to an empty house. I confess that I was not sorry to sit down ashore again under the shelter of a roof, and to look out over the reef to the foam-capped waves, and listen to the freshening wind from the security of the land. The sea looks especially beautiful from the land.

Next day was Sunday, and we had a big service in the church. The singing was extremely good, both in English and the native language. The church is of concrete, made with lime from the reef. I had much friendly intercourse with the people, and explained very fully all that we hoped to do, how the new Bishop would come round and confirm them after they had been instructed, and how the native deacons would in future be transformed into churchwardens, and in some instances into lay-readers. This is an important place, and all went without a hitch. The white church, the green palm-trees, purple reef, and blue sea beyond, made a most beautiful picture.

Next morning we were up at five-thirty a.m. and off by seven a.m., and made a good passage to Murray Island, passing through innumerable reefs. The islands are volcanic and three in number. They rise to the height of 700 feet and mark the northern end of the 1,500 miles' stretch of the great Barrier reef, which is visible some miles to the east, with the great Pacific rollers breaking on its outer edge. There is a good road for about five miles round most of the island, through gardens and shade-trees. It is enchantingly

beautiful as one looks down on the shore reef with its ancient walls for fish-traps and the deep water beyond. Next morning at the ordinary week-day morning prayer at seven a.m. there were 150 people present out of a total population of 450. Some had several miles to walk. The church was a large and ecclesiastical-looking concrete building, save for a rostrum in the centre. We spent the whole morning discussing questions of Church discipline with the native Church officials, as many wished to be readmitted to Church membership. Out of twenty-five cases there were three of attending forbidden dances, four of drunkenness, and five of immorality, while the majority of excommunications (thirteen) were for an offence which is hardly considered serious among white Christians—namely, quarrelling between husband and wife. As we could hardly receive the penitents into a Church which was as yet Anglican only in name, I asked Mr. Walker to receive back in their accustomed manner those who had been guilty of the lesser offences, while those who had sinned more seriously were put on probation until the arrival of our first white missionary priest.

Old heathen customs and traditions still linger on Murray, which is the most isolated of all the Islands. I was shown the place where the north-west monsoon is manufactured, and when the Government school-teacher, Mr. Bruce, first introduced a rain-gauge, there was nearly a riot, as the people were convinced that it was intended to prevent the rain from falling. The view from the rim of the old crater is very fine, and the vegetation luxuriant. We were off at daylight next morning, hoping to reach Saibai, one hundred miles away, by moonlight the same night, but when we reached the passage through the Warrior reef the sun was shining in our eyes, and it was impossible to go on, as it is full of dangerous patches. So we had to go back to the nearest

island and anchor in the dark on the edge of the reef, a ticklish business, as it shelves from low-water mark to eighteen fathoms in a few yards. We did not reach Saibai until well on into the next afternoon, but found all the people waiting to welcome us. One of them made a very good little speech. He said that since the London Missionary Society had been obliged to curtail their work, they had been like children who have lost father and mother. "We do not know what to do, where to look, where to go. Now you will be our father and show us the way to go. We thank you." I had service, and afterwards several weddings. The elderly native policeman was very busy marshalling the couples and fetching anyone who was needed. He was absent when we began, and afterwards I saw him looking very woebegone. It appeared that he also wanted to be married to a widow. He did not know his age, but it was the same as the bride's.

We left Saibai early next morning, and had a splendid run to Mabuiag. We passed over several large shoals and went through the Mabuiag reef by the narrowest passage that it was possible to conceive. It was not even straight, and in several places there could not have been more than a foot or eighteen inches to spare between the ship's side and the submerged rocks, but the steersman knew his ground to an inch. We landed at two p.m. and made our way to the village, escorted by a number of men. The new concrete church is a handsome building, seventy feet long and very lofty. The roof, which was to be of red tiles, was not yet erected, though the materials were on the spot (having been given by one of the natives as a thankoffering for finding a pearl when fishing), as the people were doubtful of their architectural skill. We were able to arrange for the superintendence of its erection, and also for the raising of the sanctuary, as the floor was fortunately not completed.

TAIBLE AND SON AT BADU, TORRES STRAITS

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We left at two a.m., and with a violent head wind and rough sea got a tremendous bucketing, though the sea had by this time lost all its terrors for us, and about mid-day reached Adam, a picturesque little village on the western end of Moa Island, and thence on in the afternoon to Badu, the last of the Islands. Next day was Sunday, and we had a crowded congregation at the church at ten a.m., more than half being men. The singing was excellent. Here, as elsewhere, we had a most satisfactory meeting, and by the help of Mr. Walker put ourselves thoroughly in touch with the people. I was waited upon here by an old man, who came anxiously to inquire whether I would continue him in the office which he had held for forty years. It appeared that he was the official Church awakener, and he had an ancient black rod with a silver top, originally, I fancy, part of an umbrella, with which he went round and prodded every member of the congregation who fell asleep under the sometines very long-winded exhortations of the native deacons. "Sometimes," complained the people, "decona preach so long, he altogether break our backs!" and because of the official prodder there was no refuge in sleep. The old worthy was continued in his office, it being understood that he was now old and no longer unduly severe.

There is a flourishing Temperance Society among the men, of whom sixty are pledged to total abstinence entirely of their own motion. In the afternoon, after the Bible-class, we walked up the hill and had a wonderful view of the Islands in every direction. The only view that I know to compare with it is that from Cape Misenum, which protected and served as a lookout to the old Roman naval station, Baiæ. The Badu view is, however, at once wider and more beautiful. We reached Thursday Island next day after twelve days' absence, all of us deeply impressed by the frankness and kindness with which we had been

received, and by the magnificent opportunity offered to the Church among these islanders, a strong and intelligent race, over two thousand in number, and rapidly increasing in population, and one and all prepared to accept our ministrations without qualifications or reservations of any kind. An appeal was at once issued by the Board of Missions for a good vessel and for two priests. The money for the ship was soon forthcoming, but there was a little delay before the men were found in the persons of Rev. J. Done and Rev. G. A. Luscombe, and a third priest has recently been found in the person of Rev. W. H. Macfarlane. The vessel built at Thursday Island has proved herself an excellent seaboat, and bears the appropriate name of the *Herald*, and the work has gone on quickly since the arrival of the two missionary priests.

It was probably a very fortunate thing for the Mission that my successor, the present Bishop of Carpentaria, had charge of the work so very nearly from the commencement. His knowledge of native character and ways and his experience of the best methods of discipline, gathered from his years of devoted missionary service in New Guinea, made him far more suited than any amateur, however deeply interested, to face and solve the many difficult problems presented by the Mission; and they are apparently being solved with most remarkable success. The Bishop has already confirmed large numbers of the natives, no less than eighty being confirmed on one occasion at Mabuiag, and in a few years the roll of communicants should be a long one. The following quotations from an article of Mr. T. J. McMahon, a perfectly independent traveller and observer, published in March, 1917, will illustrate both the progress of the Mission and the hugeness of the work for which Bishop Newton is responsible in his diocese of 600,000 square miles.

"Fifty years ago the natives of the islands of Torres

Straits, North Australia, were in the Stone Age; to-day they give promise of a future that might well buoy up with joyful hope those heroic men and women who, in their grand unselfishness, are contributing to the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of these natives, and by their endeavours at the present moment are making that bright future well assured.

" For forty-five years, through stress and trouble, leaving a history every page of which shines with the noble deeds of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society, the foundation of Mission work has been well laid in these Torres Straits Islands. Recently—since the war—this extensive field has, by a complete and happy agreement, passed under the control of the Australian Board of Missions.

" The sound and practical work which always characterizes the methods of the L.M.S. is very evident not only in the condition of the natives, but in the churches and schools found almost everywhere. The Australian Board of Missions in Torres Straits, with a great and increasing work before it, has the advantage of a start from definite and well advanced conditions, and the authorities are not slow to give generous praise, deservedly merited, to their worthy predecessors.

" One can but marvel at the courage of the authorities of this Mission when, in the time of the clash of the greatest and most awful war of the " civilized " nations, they have taken over the huge responsibility of these Islands. The difficulties of Mission work have increased a hundredfold, making the financial task overwhelming. Nothing daunted, this Mission has cheerfully shouldered these extra responsibilities with a courage steadfast and true, with a determination that cannot fail to achieve success, and with a hope that knows no darkness.

" Few Bishops have such an immense territory as the

Right Rev. Henry Newton, or one so scattered to work and manage. It comprises all the northern portion of Australia except the nor'-west, in places right into the centre of the continent, and all the islands of Torres Straits and those that adjoin the coast of the Great Northlands of Australia. It is a diocese of great empty spaces, of great distances, of wild peoples, of unknown and lonely parts of an area covering thousands and thousands of square miles, and withal one of the most amazing possibilities. The Bishops of this little world in itself have been grand men and energetic workers, and the present man, one with strength and health, is a worker as indefatigable as he is persistent and earnest.

"Home life always a far distant joy; travelling in small open sailing boats in all sorts of seas, through all sorts of dangers; riding on horseback in lonely back-blocks and on silent roads, miles away from habitations; driving for thousands of miles over trackless bush beset with the dangers of thirst, hunger, and savage tribes, often travelling in places where few white men have trodden before; camping out in all sorts of weather; living on the plainest and roughest of food; and all the time nothing but work, that goes on year in and year out, and must not stop—that is the life of Bishop Newton and his workers, each day bringing its quota of labour, but each day a brighter day for its coming. It is the cheerfulness of this Bishop and the men and women of the Mission that sheds a glory over their efforts and commands admiration and respect.

"Already the results of the Mission in these Torres Straits Islands are apparent; there is a forward movement, decided and encouraging. Yet the task needs giant efforts, giant resolution, giant courage, and above all giant support. Men like Bishop Newton, his priests and workers, can be depended upon to do their part thoroughly."

This testimony is true, and it does indeed seem as if the

act of faith by which the Board of Missions accepted this additional burden a few months after the beginning of the war were already bearing its fruit in the special blessing of God upon the work. It is a work which seems to me extraordinarily full of hope and promise. There are now 520 Torres Straits Islands communicants, and a large number now under instruction should be confirmed this year.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW GUINEA MISSION

To the north of Australia, and approaching it within less than one hundred miles, lies the great island of New Guinea, or Papua, the largest island in the world if we except Australia. In 1883 an Australian statesman attempted to annex such part of Papua as was not claimed by the Dutch on the grounds of its value to the Empire and the danger of its annexation by a foreign Power. Lord Derby repudiated this action on the ground that "the apprehensions that some foreign Power was about to occupy New Guinea appeared to be indefinite and unfounded." In the following year, however, North-Eastern New Guinea was annexed by Germany, and the Imperial Government thereupon proclaimed a protectorate over what was left—*i.e.*, the portion of the island nearest Australia.

New Guinea is still to a large extent a land of romance. One can still meet travellers straight from the interior with strange tales of the impenetrable forest through which a track has to be cut yard by yard, of great unknown rivers navigated on rafts that are for ever capsizing in the rapids, of quaint inland tribes who have never seen a white man, of the fierce head-hunters, of the bamboo loop, which they drop over the neck of a fleeing foe, jerking it backward on to the spike behind which dislocates the vertebræ, of the sharp bamboo knife with which they sever the precious head, of the cannibal feasts, of the beautiful birds of paradise, of the gorgeous butterflies tethered alive to some

dusky beauty's hair, of the great mountains topped with snow within nine degrees of the equator.

The natives of Papua are of a much higher type than the aborigines of Australia, living in well-built houses, which were often planted in lofty trees to escape the attacks of enemies, and cultivating the soil with considerable skill. They make earthenware cooking-pots, tapa cloth, and nets, and manufacture bows of great strength for fighting, and show considerable artistic skill in ornamentation of their weapons, persons, and huge masses of hair, which they wear erect in the form of an elaborate head-dress, finished off with a comb.

As they are fiercer in battle and more intelligent in labour and invention than the weaker and gentler tribes of Australia, though, like them, divided into small tribes and ignorant of any political unity, so they are more capable of receiving religious impressions and carrying them out into action with a more profound modification of their life, thought, and immemorial customs.

The New Guinea Mission is by far the most important of those in Australian territory, and the results have been not only relatively but actually most remarkable, as we hope to show.

In 1888 the British Protectorate developed into British sovereignty. The General Synod of the Church in Australia had already, in 1886, resolved " that the recent annexation of a portion of New Guinea imposes direct obligation on the Church to provide for the spiritual welfare both of the natives and of the settlers "; but resolutions of Synods are useless by themselves, although the need was strongly re-emphasized by a paper read at the Church Congress in Sydney in May, 1889, by the Hon. John Douglas, in which he pointed out that a large sphere of unoccupied territory was awaiting the Church in New Guinea.

The Church waited for the man, and the man came in

Albert Maclaren, with whose life and death the foundation of the New Guinea Mission will always be associated. He was born at Cowes in 1853, and, like so many other great missionaries, trained at St. Augustine's, Canterbury. He had intended to offer himself for Central Africa, but ill-health prevented his acceptance, and he was ordained to work in Queensland, where he left his mark in a fine Church and many memories in the hearts of the people of Mackay. He went from there to West Maitland, in New South Wales, and in 1887 accompanied Bishop Pearson to England, where he went to Durham and took his degree in 1889. In the previous year, Bishop Barry had issued an appeal for men and money for the New Guinea Mission. This appeal came under Maclaren's notice, and he volunteered and was accepted, and left almost immediately for the scene of his future work and death.

Slight but well built, with clear-cut features, a tender mouth, and beautiful, spiritual eyes, Maclaren was a man of abounding vitality, who always succeeded in impressing others and carrying them away with the tide of his own enthusiasm. He was not always practical, and was sometimes impatient of discipline and convention, but he had a burning love for souls, an almost boundless sympathy, and an absolute disregard of all selfish or personal considerations. Even those whom he most exasperated by his views could not help forgiving and loving the man, for he was one of those to whom the spiritual is the real, and who could never find his true home on earth.

He left England with the conviction that he would not return. "It is good-bye for me," he said, as his vessel left. He reached Sydney at the end of 1889, and in February he paid his first visit to New Guinea in the s.s. *Merrie England*, the yacht of the Governor, Sir William Macgregor. He found there were already three missionary societies at work, the Roman Catholic, whose work centred

on Yule Island, the London Missionary Society, who had occupied the south-east coast, including Port Moresby, the seat of Government, and the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which had just recently occupied the islands on which Maclaren had thought of starting his Mission. Of these three, our own Mission has come most in contact with the London Missionary Society, whose work we afterwards took over in the Torres Straits. It is therefore worth while giving Maclaren's own opinion of their work on the occasion of his second visit. After criticizing the Roman Catholic Mission unfavourably he proceeds: "The system pursued by the London Missionary Society is more practical and worthy of imitation. They place native teachers from the South Sea Islands, who give the first simple teachings to the Papuans in Christianity. Their belief, too, is less complicated. They teach the great doctrine of God's revelation to man, and as far as I have seen it will take some time to get beyond this in New Guinea. . . . After nearly twenty years' work, many in England would be disappointed by the visible results of the London Missionary Society, and yet they have accomplished a noble work. Lawes and Chalmers, two men entirely different, have, each in his own way, done much, and are held in high esteem by the natives. Our Mission must learn by this example. A little more ritual would help them. It must do so; the natives are much impressed by outward surroundings."

Maclaren's first visit to New Guinea only lasted a few days, and he was at Thursday Island when the terrible wreck of the *Quetta* took place. He was indefatigable in trying to succour the survivors, and it was at his suggestion that the beautiful memorial church was erected, which now forms the cathedral of the Diocese of Carpentaria. He returned to New Guinea on May 1, and had a meeting at Port Moresby with the Revs. W. G. Lawes, F. W. Walker,

and H. Dauncey, of the London Missionary Society, and the Rev. G. Brown, of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. It was agreed that the Anglican Mission should take as its sphere the coast from Cape Ducie to Mitre Rock, on the north-east coast, the London Missionary Society taking the coast to the south and west, and the Wesleyan Missionary Society the outlying islands, except those to the west. The making of any such agreement has been criticized, but it is difficult to see what else Maclaren could have done. The area assigned to the Church is so large that even yet we have barely covered the coast of it even in name, and it has been more than once hinted that unless we increase our staff, some of it may be assigned to another Mission. In addition, the Government, which at this time was alone able to assist in transport, and in other ways make settlement possible, was strongly in favour of such a division of spheres of work, and emphasized its opinion by refusing land to more than one Mission at the same place. It was not of course ever intended that this arrangement should apply to white settlers in New Guinea, and this has been exemplified by the erection of churches and the stationing of priests at Samarai and Port Moresby. The principle of spheres of missionary work is now generally accepted as the only means by which overlapping and waste of means can be prevented. In May Maclaren was back in New Guinea, having offered to act as private secretary to the Governor for three months without remuneration in order that the private secretary might go on furlough on full pay. This gave him an opportunity of visiting various points on the coast and selecting a site for the first Mission Station. On June 6 he writes in his diary: " On Wednesday I paid a visit to Bishop Verjus, on Yule Island, and found him ill in bed with fever. I went into the little chapel and said my prayers and felt refreshed by the sight of a place of worship. How small all our divisions appear in the

presence of savage heathenism! No doubt some Protestants would tell me that I could have said my prayers in the open air far better. I am so constituted that I found it a pleasure to be alone with God in that humble chapel, though it was not one of our own, and therefore I used it and was glad of the chance. On my return to the Bishop he gave me his photo, and asked me to remember him in my prayers, and wished me success in my work at the other end of New Guinea. He is a kind and good man, and thoroughly in earnest in his work."

He visited a proposed site in Chad's Bay, and made a characteristic entry in his diary: "After dinner the Southern Cross shone brightly over the site of our new Mission, a good omen. On landing, I at once said prayers to God for His blessing on it, and to be kept from sin." Everywhere Maclaren made friends with the natives and told them that he was returning to live among them. The Governor, Sir William Macgregor, was famed for the intrepid courage with which he sought out offenders alone, or with one or two attendants only, and the landings were often not without danger; but Maclaren was as cool as his chief, and learnt much of the country and people during his three months' tour. In August he returned to Australia to obtain men and money to start the work. While travelling in New South Wales he met the Rev. Copland King in a train, a man whose name is almost as closely associated with the founding of the Mission as that of Maclaren, and who after twenty-seven years is still working away on the Mambare River. Mr. Copland King says: "I introduced myself to Mr. Maclaren, and told him that I was interested in the Mission. My Sunday-school collected for it, and I had heard him speak at the great missionary meeting in Sydney, and should like to know more about the work he was starting. He explained the position of affairs to me, and we had a long conversation. He told me about some

people he was hoping to enlist, and then he asked me if I would come with him. I had no idea of such a thing previously, but I would not refuse straight off, and we went as fully as possible into the subject. We got out at Quirindi, and walked up and down the dusty streets of that town till late at night. We went on by an early train next morning without any further opportunity of conversation. Indeed, I think we both felt that we had thrashed the subject out, and during the week following I made my offer and the matter was arranged."

Maclaren spent nearly a year in the toilsome work of speaking, preaching, and arousing interest in the work throughout Australia, and on July 4, 1891, he and Copland King left Sydney for New Guinea.

An old collier schooner, the *Grace Lynn*, was to meet them at Cooktown with the materials for their house and the carpenters who were to erect it.

Maclaren wrote from Cooktown: "I am afraid we shall have a bad time going across to Samarai, as our ship, the *Grace Lynn*, is a very poor sailor. The weather has been terrible, and more than one ship is overdue. I am sorry to say we have a very drunken mate on board. Our carpenters are decent fellows, though they have been grumbling at the amount of work they have had to do. I am afraid the ship is undermanned." The *Grace Lynn*, however, arrived at Samarai after a long passage, being towed in the last part of the way by the *Merrie England*, and Maclaren and King went on in the whaleboat to inspect the proposed site.

The site at Chad's Bay was first examined, but was rejected in favour of Bartle Bay, twenty-five miles to the north-east, and strongly recommended by Sir William Macgregor. Maclaren says: "The coast between Chad's Bay and Bartle Bay is striking and beautiful. Steep hills, 2,000 to 3,000 feet high, come down to within a short

distance of the beach, while in some places they reach right to the water's edge. The land is not heavily timbered, but what timber there is is very picturesque, and a good many waterfalls are to be seen half-way up the hills, running down between the overhanging foliage of the trees. We reached Baunia about six a.m., and dropped anchor a short distance from the beach, as the rollers were too heavy to enable us to take the whaleboat on to the beach in safety, besides which we were not certain how the natives would receive us. It was our first Sunday in New Guinea, and an unusual one.

"Early on Monday morning I hailed a canoe, which came alongside and into which I attempted to get, but alas! just as I thought myself safely on board, over it went, and I found myself some distance below the surface. I made for the canoe, and called for a rope from our boat and was dragged on board again. We landed about twenty minutes later, and were kindly received by about forty natives, who had congregated on the beach. After many delays the *Grace Lynn* arrived, and the work of unloading began. Part of her cargo was a cart-horse, which created the greatest astonishment among the natives, who came from all parts to see 'horsa,' or 'the enormous pig,' as they called him."

The site of the Mission is thus described: "We could see it ten miles out at sea, a beautiful grass-covered plateau two hundred feet above the sea, and half a mile inland. Underneath it and nearer the sea is the pretty native village of Wedau. We had to pass through it on our way to the hill which the natives call Dogura."

Troubles began quickly to accumulate: great difficulties were met with in getting the material up the hill; important parts of the house were short shipped; the white carpenters worked in a very leisurely fashion, and had finally to be sent back to Sydney; but Maclaren was cheered by the arrival

of Mr. and Mrs. Tomlinson, who share with the Rev. Copland King the honour of twenty-seven years' continuous service on the Mission. King fell ill, and had to go away for a time to recover his health. Maclaren was indefatigable, urging the natives to work, keeping them in a good temper, learning their language, superintending the landing of goods, washing clothes, and doing a dozen other things at the same time. On Sundays he went round the villages and taught. As soon as the work at Dogura was well in hand he set off on a missionary tour along the coast. On his return he set off in the whaleboat for Samarai. The weather was bad, and he got very wet, and was attacked by fever on his arrival. He soon became so ill that he was taken to Cooktown in the *Merrie England*. He died at sea the day before the ship's arrival, and was buried in the Cooktown cemetery. A somewhat unworthy memorial was erected over his grave, but that was replaced by a marble cross some ten years ago. Thus was laid the foundation of the New Guinea Mission.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GROWING WORK

It is of course only possible in a few chapters to give a very brief sketch of the growth of the Mission. On Maclaren's death at the end of 1891 all seemed disaster. A Sydney newspaper thus summed up the result of the first six months' work: "Two lives lost, two men ill, state of the others uncertain, no leader, and the result of all this and many months' labour and time—nil!" Yes, it was so to men's eyes, but not to God's.

As soon as Mr. King was well enough he went back as head of the Mission, taking two more carpenters and more timber. The children could not be persuaded to go to Dogura, so the missionaries went daily to Wedau and Wamira and taught and healed the sick, gradually extending their ministrations by whaleboat along the coast. Next year a small fourteen-ton schooner, the *Albert Maclaren*, arrived for the use of the Mission, bringing a layman and two South Sea Islanders for the staff. These South Sea Islanders and those who followed them exceeded in number the white members of the staff, and were of the utmost value to the Mission. They were men who had either been baptized in childhood and educated by the Melanesian Mission, or who had been taught at one of the many South Sea Island Missions on the sugar plantations of Queensland. In race they were closely akin to the natives of North-East New Guinea, and understood their customs and ideas and quickly learnt their language. Although not highly

intelligent, they were deeply in earnest, and possessed real missionary zeal, and a genius for extempore prayer; above all, most of them clearly understood that Christianity must be practical, and not merely commended, but set a high example of the practical Christian life. It is difficult to see how the Mission, understaffed with white laymen, and especially with priests, as it always was, could have got on at all had it not been for the quiet devoted labours of the South Sea Island Christians. It is quite true that a point was comparatively soon reached beyond which they could not carry their people, but in the early years their services were simply invaluable.

The first native church was built at Taupota of logs, with a roof of sago-palm. At the end of 1894, Mr. Tomlinson had to go away for a short time for medical treatment, and for a while Mr. King and a South Sea teacher represented the Anglican Mission in New Guinea. Shortly after, however, a young priest and his sister arrived, and four more South Sea Islanders. It was not until 1896 that the first baptisms took place, and they are best described in Mr. King's own words: "The day approached when we should gather in our firstfruits. For a long time past the catechumens' classes had been steadily increasing. We were able to explain our standard of rules more fully to them as time went on, and expulsion from the classes became more and more a severe punishment. But again and again, as we neared the longed-for goal, we were disappointed, and the natives, who had raised our expectations by their attention to our lessons, lapsed from the narrow way and dispelled our bright hopes. At last we found that there were only two young men whom we could venture at first to admit to the Sacrament of Baptism. We spent much time and care over the preparation of these two. The Baptism service was translated, revised, and corrected, typewritten and taught; the Catechism was made the basis

of instruction, though it had not yet been translated, nor, if so, could it have been used without adaptation. They were taught the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and had long before learnt the Ten Commandments, and the temptations which they were daily withstanding and others were falling under were a vivid illustration of the teaching they received concerning the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"The training culminated towards the end of Lent, 1896, and we decided to have the Baptism on Easter Day on the beach near the village. So we cut down the grass on each bank of a running stream; one could see the water bubbling out of the ground, and its whole length was not thirty yards down to the sea. It ran strongly, but was not too wide to be stepped over. On the Sunday afternoon the village church bell rang and all the inhabitants came along the shore and seated themselves on the right bank of the stream. The body of Christians, three missionaries from Dogura, five South Sea Islanders, and seven casual visitors (miners) were on the left bank, and the catechumens were on the right bank in front of the heathen. The address explained to all the meaning of the service, and when the time came, the two candidates, each dressed in white singlet and calico, remained standing in front of their fellows and answered distinctly the questions put to them. Then the Baptism came. I took Aigeri by the hand, led him into the water, and as he stood there I poured water on his forehead and baptized him Samuela, and having been signed with the sign of the Cross, he stepped up into the assembly of the Christians, and then we did the same for Agadabi, and Pilipo was added to the Church."

In 1896 the General Synod resolved "that it is desirable to establish a bishopric forthwith in New Guinea," and nine months later a Bishop was found in one who had devoted, and has never since ceased to devote, all his time, strength, and worldly possessions to the service of the

Church—Canon Montagu John Stone-Wigg, of Brisbane. Immediately after his consecration the Bishop took the bold step of taking personally the financial responsibility of the Mission, under pledge only of support by the Executive Council. The Bishop's only official income was a sum of £450 promised for five years by various Churchmen, not all of which was paid. This and much more of his private means he entirely devoted to the diocese.

The Bishop had to face tremendous difficulties. He had to spend three months travelling through Australia collecting money and men before he could leave for his diocese, and all through its history the wonderful work of the Mission has been continually hampered by these two needs. Soon after the Bishop's arrival a hurricane struck the north-east coast of New Guinea, trees were up-rooted and villages destroyed. At Dogura, two whaleboats were dashed to pieces and the schooner thrown upon the beach with her mainmast smashed; the boathouse and dinghies were destroyed and a new bulk store with £300 worth of newly arrived stores swept clean away. Shortly after this the Mission set up for the public good the first marine light in New Guinea, consisting of a fifteen-inch lamp with proper lenses and reflectors on Dog's Hill at Mukawa.

In August, 1899, Henry Newton arrived, the first priest who offered for New Guinea in the nineteen months since the Bishop's consecration. This set Mr. King free for translation work, for which he had special gifts.

The Bishop spent his time journeying along the coast in the schooner, or more often in open whaleboats, as the schooner had often to be absent for supplies.

The following account of an attempt to reach the Mamba River is characteristic of innumerable other journeys, and too often fever was, as on this occasion, his companion, often his only one:

" It was slow work," the Bishop wrote, " and instead of

anchoring at five p.m., as we usually do on that dangerous coast, we pressed on, anxious to reach the Station. It was past six p.m. when we saw the lights, and an hour later before we got abreast of them and about to turn into the anchorage. Then a black rain-squall swept down upon us, put out all the Station lights, and left us in pitch darkness. Other rain-squalls followed, the sea got up, and we were soon in difficulties. It was impossible to find our way in the dark. Reefs abounded, and a two-knot current would upset any calculations. We were unfortunately very short of ground-tackle, having only thirty fathoms of chain. So we let run eighty fathoms of coir rope and a small anchor. The strain on it was severe—it was stretched as tight as a fiddlestring—but it held bravely till midnight, when the edge of the rock cut it through, and we were once more adrift. There was no help for it but to put out to sea. It might mean going straight on the reefs, and our small dinghy could not have lived in the sea that was running. The night had fortunately cleared, and we could see where we were going, but it was an anxious time till daylight appeared, going about every quarter of an hour, and ready every minute for a crash. God mercifully preserved us, and in the morning we found ourselves ten miles beyond the Station, and it took us all that day to beat back again to Tufi. All the week I had been troubled with fever, and by this time the vomiting was so incessant that I felt it impossible to go on to the Mamba. The schooner had waited a day or two, but then went on without me, and I was most hospitably treated by the Resident Magistrate. I soon got well, and filled up the time with arrears of writing."

The physical discomforts were, however, the most easily borne of the Bishop's troubles. In 1902, he visited England, hoping to do something towards obtaining a See endowment, as the guarantee had nearly expired and

the burden of debt was pressing heavily on the Mission. He was ill most of the time with fever and bronchitis, but was able to invest £5,500 as the commencement of an endowment fund. By the time of his return the white staff numbered twenty-eight, there were 1,000 children in the schools, and 500 baptized persons, with 200 communicants. Every one of these meant long preparatory work. It was seven years before there were any baptisms at Dogura, five at Boianai, and Taupota, and ten on the Mamba River. The general rule was at least two or three years' preparation for baptism, and a minimum of two years' more for confirmation. In 1902, a severe famine was added to the other troubles of the Mission, and it was necessary to send over to Queensland to buy rice for the starving people.

When the Bishop was in England he received from an American gentleman the gift of an oil launch, which was of immense service to the Mission for eight years. The end of the launch was in accordance with the high traditions of the New Guinea Mission. At the end of 1911 the launch was anchored off Taupota when the engineer in charge, a native boy named Edric, who had recently been confirmed, saw a hurricane approaching. He ordered his companion to swim ashore, and no one would have blamed him if he had followed his example, but Edric did not so understand the idea of duty. There was a faint chance of saving the property of the Mission by going straight out to sea, and he got under way and steered straight for the heart of the storm, a tiny speck of white against the inky blackness of the cyclone. Neither boy nor launch were seen again, but a Mission which can breed such boys has a great future before it.

Gradually the sphere of the Mission was extended to Collingwood Bay, and finally to the Mamba River, near the border of German New Guinea, but this only meant

that Missions were begun in a few isolated spots on the coast, leaving great stretches quite untouched, and that the interior was entirely unvisited. So inadequate were the means supplied to work the Mission in men and money that Sir William Macgregor was obliged to hint more than once that unless the Anglican Church took its responsibilities more seriously, and was prepared to really grapple with the problem on an adequate scale, some of the territory assigned to it would have to be taken away and given to another religious body. It was not the fault of the Bishop who was indefatigable in his labours and utterly unsparing of himself. A layman who accompanied the Bishop on a journey up the Mamba thus describes his experiences: "Hardly had we landed when a cloud of mosquitoes flew to greet us. They let us smash them by sevens and tens on all exposed parts of our body. M. camped in the boat while the Bishop and I slung our nets under the fly, killing the scores of mosquitoes which got in with us. At eleven it began to rain, and came in through my net, which projected beyond the fly. M. got wet to the skin and came up to us. I was sitting at the innermost corner of my net with the remainder a pool of water. M. tried to get in, but when he lifted the net several hundreds of the pests entered and drove us out. We tried to cover ourselves with the wet blankets, but the mosquitoes got into our nostrils, crawling over the blankets, and our position was one of acute misery. Never had I found a night so long, and we hurried away at the first break of dawn. We found that the clearing had once been a village, but the mosquitoes had driven the people away."

The work went on in spite of difficulties and hardships, which were met with from the beginning. "When I reach a village," wrote Mr. King in 1900, "I get the people together and give them an address." This was on the Gira, after eight months' study of their language. "I

tell them that they are to be friendly with the white man, and that fighting is to stop. I tell them about the Father in the sky, what His words are to us, and about His Son, who came to earth. I know they cannot take in much, but the people who have heard it before will talk about it afterwards. But now the name of God and of Our Lord has been declared on the Gira, and the sound of a hymn in the tongue of the people has risen above the coconuts in the most northern village we know of in British New Guinea."

In 1902 a hospital was established on the Mamba for the benefit of the natives and of the white miners, of whom for a time there were a considerable number. It was extremely useful, but the overworked nurses broke down in health, and the expenses were so heavy that it had to be closed as part of the great retrenchment of the following year.

A great work was done at Boianai by Francis de Sales Buchanan, an elderly layman, who joined the Mission in 1899. Two years later Mr. Newton wrote: "Everyone who goes is struck with the change. Two years ago all was opposition, now all is friendliness. Two years ago murders and disturbances were common in the neighbourhood, now everything is quiet, and when a murder was committed in the mountains a short time ago, one of the chief men of the mountain tribe came to explain everything to Mr. Buchanan, and to ask him, in reporting it to the Government, to let all the mitigating circumstances be known.

"To what is the change due? Those who know the place and the people cannot but think that it is a wonderful instance of the working of the Holy Spirit by indirect means, and with inadequate instruments. Willie Holi's influence was great indeed; Dick has been wonderfully sincere and single-minded, with never a thought for any-

thing but God's work; Mr. Buchanan must have done much, but he has not yet mastered the language, and depends entirely upon Dick for interpreting; the Government has done something in the way of punishing outbreaks and murders; and the influence of the two Boianai boys baptized at Dogura has had its share. But all this is very inadequate cause for such effect. One can only think of the words spoken to the prophets of old: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.'"

Next year and the year after the number of baptisms grew at Boianai at an extraordinary rate, and Mr. Buchanan remained there for ten years without furlough until a priest came to take charge. He has now been eighteen years on the Mission, and absolutely refused any furlough. He once, under severe threats, got as far as Samarai, but managed to persuade the doctor that he was all right, and went back to his beloved work.

Bishop Stone-Wigg's ten years of service were now drawing to a close. He had illness after illness, the result of hardships to which he had been exposed, and when in England for the Lambeth Conference of 1908 the report of the doctors made it clear that he could not possibly live longer in the tropics. He accordingly resigned in August, 1908, and his successor, Rev. Gerald Sharp, the present Bishop, was not chosen and consecrated until 1910. In the interval the Archbishop of Brisbane as Metropolitan visited New Guinea, greatly cheering and encouraging the workers.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PEOPLE

It may be well, before speaking of the work during the episcopate of the present Bishop, to give a little more detailed description of the country and people, and the present Bishop of Carpentaria has kindly allowed me to quote from his fascinating book, "In Far New Guinea." Unfortunately, most of the copies of this book were destroyed by a fire at the publisher's, and it is therefore far less known than it deserves to be. Speaking of the coast occupied by the Mission, he says: "At the eastern end of the mainland of New Guinea the land runs out into a long narrow point with a ridge in the middle of it, the end of the long mountain range which forms, as it were, a backbone from far away to the north-west in Dutch and German territory to East Cape in the south-east. Away to the north-west the mountains rise to unknown heights into the region of perpetual snow. The mainland at the end of the Cape is low and covered with coco-palms leaning out over the sea, but very soon the land rises suddenly, and the hill is covered with a dense scrub, a dark green mass, with at certain seasons splashes of bright red in the foliage. Round the Cape you travel—if the wind and tide suit—and then a course is shaped at a very sharp angle to the direction you have come. Native villages, the houses on piles, line the shore, roof and walls of plaited coco or sewn sago-leaves, or palm-leaves of some kind or other, blending in perfect harmony with nature. Colours of

various hues from crotons and dracænas brighten the scene; canoes are pulled up on the beach; native gardens cut out of the scrub or the mountain-side are surrounded by a fence of poles to keep out wallabies and wild pigs; the natives walking about in the villages, or sitting here and there as they watch the vessels go by, add a touch of life to the scene; the women, with their skirts of coco-palm leaves or sago-leaves, swinging and swishing with the motion from the hips, walk along, some carrying bags of food or bundles of wood suspended from their shaven heads, and it may be a baby on top of the load, or carried straddle-wise on one hip; the men, with their great bushy heads of hair, carry a spear or tomahawk over the shoulder, for a man never goes without one or the other, or both. A little netted bag or small plaited basket is suspended from the shoulder containing areca nuts and lime spatula, a little gourd of lime, a few pepper-leaves, and various odds and ends, as numerous and perhaps more useful than those which every schoolboy carries in his pocket. The men have little clothing, but their dark skin obviates any suggestion of nakedness. They have merely a cincture round the waist, it may be of twisted human hair or plaited vine-roots, no thicker than a boot lace, but of many strands, and a loin-cloth of palm-leaves, treated with heat of the fire and marked with a pattern, fixed to the belt in front and behind. Farther up the coast these loin-cloths are made of the bark of a mulberry beaten out and often dyed with quaint stencilled designs, and the end behind hangs down nearly to the ground, so that it is no wonder some strangers who did not go ashore went off to tell of people who certainly had tails. If there be one who has been fortunate enough to have been away working for the white men, or who has made copra to sell to some trader, he will be distinguished—or his friends will, for they pass round their property—by a fathom or so of calico, red

or blue, or white or vari-coloured, or which had been in time past of some such colour, though now the dirt has sobered all down to a dull yellowy hue; this will be wound round the waist, the end falling to the knees, and fastened round his body is a leather belt with watch-pouch and knife sheath, the former innocent of timepiece, but filled with small articles compressed into a small space, the other nearly always with a knife in it, for what can be more useful to a native? The pigs and a few fowls wander under the coco-palms investigating everything, apparently on quite friendly terms till the fowl lights on something, only to be made to relinquish it by some interfering pig.

"From East Cape to Cape Ducie you run along not far from the shore, and the scenery is much of the same character, and then it all suddenly changes. The mountains are still close to the beach, with but little fore-shore, but the scrubs give way to grass on the mountain sides, and the rounded ridges to sharp razor-backs which zigzag from the shore to the range behind. The top of the range alone is covered with scrub, and there are dark lines of foliage in the gullies between the ridges. So sharp are these razor-backs that a man can only just find footing, and they fall sheer on both sides to the valleys. In the wet season the mountain sides are streaked with silver lines of water falling in cascade after cascade, rushing, tumbling, hurrying as though impatient to get back to the sea, their mother, and only at peace when they rest on her bosom. The mountains look as though they had been suddenly raised from the sea in bygone ages, and the water had washed bare the sides of all that was soft and loose, carrying back what it could to the sea that had been robbed. And indeed the huge terraces of coral, 1,000 feet up, rising cliff on cliff, tell of the days when all was under the sea."

Totemism is also a strong influence. I again quote Bishop Newton. "One cannot have much to do with the

natives of New Guinea without being struck with the important part played by totemism in their lives and thoughts, and the influence it has upon their dealings with one another. It might fairly be said, if one were bold enough to make a definite statement, that animism is the religion of the people of New Guinea. Animism, with its peopling of the world with spirits, a belief which influences so largely the life and conduct of the people, combined with the belief in and the consequent attitude towards the spirits of the dead (which may or may not be a part of what is called animism). So totemism represents the principles which regulate the social life of the people. It regulates marriage; it decides the section of the community to which the offspring belongs; it enters into the ceremonies connected with death; it creates a sort of freemasonry or family relationship which influences the behaviour of people to others far removed from them in place of abode, in dialect, in customs. All who have the same totem are looked upon as being related to one another, and wherever they go they can claim hospitality and protection from all whose totem is the same. People go to a district they have never been to before; there they find fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, and they puzzle you as they talk about them, till you remember they are totem relationships, not ordinary family ones. Men and women of the same totem may not inter-marry; to do so would be to commit incest. A young man will come to the missionary and ask advice as to whom he should marry, as there is no one of a suitable age in the village whom he can take to wife, and you suggest a name. 'She is my sister,' he will answer in astonishment, and you, bewildered, because you thought you knew all his relations, ask, 'How is she your sister?' to be told, 'Ai gugu togogi' (our origin is the same), and you understand it is a totem relationship, as close for marriage as a blood relationship."

The people in their wild state suffered, and still suffer, from many evils, of which cannibalism, which was almost universal, sorcery, and murder, were the worst. Speaking on this subject, Bishop Newton says: "Horribly brutal are some of the stories of surprise and massacre, sometimes with the meanest treachery, the guests at a feast turning on their entertainers at night-time in their own village, parties being waylaid in the mountains as they returned from a journey, and, all unarmed, butchered. Men, women and children were surprised in their gardens and murdered in cold blood, apparently from the mere lust of killing. It was not safe to travel far from home by shore. Journeys to any distance must be made by canoe. Nowadays there is fairly frequent traffic along nearly the whole coast-line; women travel alone and are unmolested, though even yet there is the danger of some cranky individual thinking over old times and taking vengeance for an ancient injury.

"There existed a never-ending vendetta. Life must be paid for by life, and the life of any member of a tribe or family, not at all necessarily related to the murderer himself, satisfied the law. Possibly the spirit of the murdered one could not rest till satisfaction had been made; there was a keen and lively—at times deadly!—sense of solidarity of race.

"Next to hereditary enmity and vendetta, the most frequent source of murder was sorcery and witchcraft. Most of the sorcerers were, and are, mountain people. It almost seems as though the fact that these people lived away in the dark scrubs, their life hidden from the shore people, invested them with unusual powers, for sorcerers and medicine-men alike come from the mountains, and the New Guinea native is strongly influenced by fear of the unknown. The crude Philistine dismisses the whole question of sorcery by saying, 'All sorcery is poison,' but

as a matter of fact, in those parts of New Guinea that I know anything about, there is very little knowledge of and less use of poison. There is no doubt that people die because a spell has been believed to have been put upon them. Whatever the power is, it is very real, even if it exists only in the belief of the sufferers, and is due to suggestion or imagination. The sorcerer believes in his own power, and the people believe in it too.

"The raw native, when asked what caused a sore on arm or leg, or foot or body, will answer at once, 'A spirit bit me,' and being pressed for details, will tell you exactly when and where. Possibly many, if not all, these sores have a nagging pain which suggests biting, for it is always 'A spirit *bit* me,' they say. Often and often in a village some poor wretch, with perhaps the whole sole of his foot one great sore, will sit in his house for weeks and make night hideous with yells, not merely from pain, but also to drive away the evil spirits which are 'eating him.' And if the unfortunate is thoroughly imbued with superstition he will accept no offer of help from a missionary. He is convinced the white man's medicine can do nothing to affect the New Guinea spirits, though it may be useful to counteract the work of 'dimdim' spirits."

The men must not, however, be regarded as mere savages. In their own way they work, and work hard—for example, they do all the building, all the work of the gardens up to the time the seed is planted, the making of canoes, the fishing and hunting, the carving and making of instruments. As Bishop Newton says: "The casual visitor to New Guinea, and even many of those who have lived in the country for years, and come into contact more or less—usually less rather than more—with the people, are agreed in one opinion: the men are inveterately lazy and the women do all the hard work. Those who have been able to see more into the lives and habits of the people

know that this is really an unfair, an untrue statement of the case. The men are not lazy. They may not care for continuous hard work of any kind, except in their gardens for long periods; they lose interest and need change—except, again, in their garden work. They are wanting in sticking power, in application, and this is perhaps the great weakness of their characters. It may be that their lives are regulated by custom and tradition, with no moral force, and so there is no result in moral strength; it may be the enervating effect of climate; it may be the result of both causes combined. As a matter of fact, in all that part of New Guinea of which I know anything the heavy work is done by the men, and, so far as physical exertion is concerned, it is the lighter work that is done by the women. Probably on the whole the women lead the harder life, but then on the whole so they do in civilized communities, where a man works a certain number of hours and a woman's work is never done. His garden is the all-important thing in the life of a New Guinea native. In it he takes most interest and most pride. He is very fond of his children; he likes to have many pigs; he takes great care of pets—pigs, cats, and dogs; he thoroughly enjoys feasts and dancing; but his first, and greatest, and abiding interest is his garden. He is a born agriculturist, and thoroughly enjoys the work. The man—if there is one—who has no garden of his own is an outcast and a ne'er-do-well."

The woman has a very busy life, and among her multifarious duties is the care of the pigs. Bishop Newton says: "She cooks the food for them and feeds them every evening, so that they are kept about the village, and do not stray far. She tames the little pigs, which have a bridle of native rope around body and neck so that they can be led about and get accustomed to the village. So important is the care of the little pigs that a woman must take one with her wherever she goes, unless there is someone to

whom she can hand her charge over for a time. A woman cannot attend service when she is looking after a pig, though sometimes, when her sense of religious duty is strong, she comes and brings the pig with her.

"The duties of looking after her children and her pigs, cleaning up her house and her village, making and mending fishing-nets and bags, gathering firewood and cooking, making her own and her daughters' skirts, making ornaments for herself and her children, gardening and fishing, give the woman in New Guinea plenty of occupation as well as variety; she cannot be said to lead an idle life."

Of the spiritual work accomplished by the Mission, up to a time some six or seven years ago, Bishop Newton writes: "We have not attempted to dissociate our converts from the everyday life of the village. We have been conservative in dealing with native customs. We have aimed at training teachers from amongst our converts, teachers who may become missionaries to their own people, and we hope in time that most of the teaching will thus pass through the medium of the native mind, and so be more adaptable to the people than it can be when presented by the foreigners who can never enter into that mind. We have boldly faced the risk of allowing our Christian children from our Stations to go back to the village life, hoping that they would raise the tone and ideals of their people, even if their own tone and ideals were lowered. We have shrunk from 'glass-case Christians,' too jealously guarded against temptation. We have allowed our Christians formally to discuss questions that affect the native Church. We have religiously recognized the validity of native marriage and carefully avoided any action which might tend to degrade such unions by exalting *at their expense* the peculiar sanctity of Christian marriage.

"We have had lamentable failures amongst our native Christians, and also some wonderful successes, as in our

limited capacity for judging we reckon failure and success. We have not been able to counteract the indifference and the casualness of the native character, the lamentable want of sticking power, the tendency to drift which is so great a weakness of the people, to the extent we hoped, but it is far too soon to judge; and there are instances of loyal Christians who have stood firm in spite of severe temptation, which give us courage and hope and which strengthen our faith.

"There are still gaps to be filled in along the coast, and we have done practically nothing for the inland people. The districts, which are nine in number, are under the charge of a white man, always, if one is available, of a priest. To the Central Station of a district are gathered a few boarders, boys on all such Stations, and girls as well on two, where there are white women to take care of them. There are Sub-stations which are under the charge of South Sea Island teachers, or of Papuan teachers whom we have trained ourselves. A couple of South Sea Island teachers are placed in charge of the Station, and they set to work to build their house, a school, a church, and to make a garden. All this means a good deal of work for the people, who give their help willingly in exchange for tobacco and small articles of trade, and the teachers get to know their people, and pick up peculiarities of dialect. As soon as the buildings are ready the children are gathered for school in the mornings five days a week. The school teaching would doubtless shock any inspector of schools, make him hold up his hands in holy horror and tear his hair in despair. The children have a lesson on Scripture or Catechism or the Commandments immediately after the school has been opened with a prayer and a hymn. Having retentive memories, the children soon learn the Commandments in a cognate dialect, parts of a simple Catechism, and hymns and psalms. They are taught to

read and write and to do simple arithmetic, and in spite of the incompetence of their teachers as schoolmasters they do learn. Certainly an educationalist would pronounce most of our out-station schools a hopeless failure, yet they do a most important work, and are a very valuable factor in the Mission influence.

" Services are held on Sundays in the centres of population in the neighbourhood of the Station in the open air, and the life of the teacher in his daily work and his daily intercourse with his people is preaching the most important lessons, all the more effective because, though they act the chief at times, these South Sea Island teachers enter into the everyday life of their people, are sympathetic and kind-hearted and ready to help those in distress. Indeed, one sometimes fears that they are so soft-hearted that they get imposed upon.

" Of course, where there is a white teacher or a coloured one who has had some training, there is a marked improvement in the schools, and the best work is done at the Central Stations of the district, where a few boarders are gathered to live a more regular life, and to be taught in school with the local village children. Our hope is that out of the hundreds of children who pass through our boarding-schools a few of them will volunteer to become teachers, for it is our aim to raise up a staff of native teachers, and in time priests and deacons, for the work of the Church in New Guinea, and it is from our boarders on the Mission Stations we hope most—in fact, from them alone can we have any hope of a supply.

" It may be that strangers passing through the village will see no difference between Christian and heathen, but then we are working, not for human judgment to decide, but for that judgment which looks on the heart and judges righteous judgment. Some do, indeed, fall back and seem all the harder to influence, but while we are prepared sadly

to admit failures and to confess disappointment, we are no more ready to admit that these condemn our work than that the catastrophes condemn, let us say, the principles of aeronautics in these later days of scientific progress. And we can as fairly claim to be justified by our success as the flying man can point to a successful flight as a proof of the rightness of the principles on which he is working. Why should missionary work be judged by failures, when everything else in life is judged by success ?"

SCENE AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW CHURCH, MOA ISLAND

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## CHAPTER X

### NEW GUINEA TO-DAY

WITH regard to the progress that the New Guinea Mission has made under the present Bishop, the Right Rev. Gerald Sharp, I cannot do better than avail myself of the kind permission of the Bishop of North Queensland to quote "whatever you like" from his most fascinating account of his recent visit. I should like to quote every word of it, but I must severely restrict myself to the limits of a chapter.

"One of my earliest landings was near to Mukawa, the Mission Station a little north of Cape Vogel, where we spent Sunday, May 7. The spot where we put ashore bore till lately the suggestive title Siragi-kapukapuna (the place for the roasting of visitors). The village of Boga-boga, three miles further down the coast, was long notorious as the best market for the disposal of prisoners. The recognized exchange for a man was three pigs, and Boga-boga took trouble with its pigs, so as to be always in a position to purchase a man. I visited Boga-boga, and was introduced to the ex-cannibal chieftain; he has not accepted Christianity, but the majority of his people have done so, and I was present at a Confirmation held there a fortnight later.

"The Mukawa Mission Station is in the charge of Rev. S. and Mrs. Tomlinson, who began at Dogura in 1891, with Albert Maclaren and Copland King, and they have with them Miss Oliver, who has been nearly seventeen years

in the Mission. The pioneers of those early days stood every chance of learning the exact meaning of the pregnant nomenclature adopted by the native for those spots at which his country might be entered. I have read Mr. Tomlinson's diary for 1891 and 1892. The published records of the Mission are mild and reticent when compared with this plain and unpretending journal.

"Attacks of fever, almost incessant, were varied by cheering messages from the Boianaians or Radavans to the effect that they were coming to kill the 'dimdims' (foreigners). Sixteen canoe loads of men from these villages landed on one occasion close to Wedau, and would certainly have carried out their threat had not the Wedauans mounted guard round their dimdim friends all night. That an enemy so formidable did ultimately withdraw, having done no harm, was due, humanly speaking, to the protection of the far less warlike Wedauans, but the Mission party have always felt that they were guarded by friends more than mortal.

"I cannot now enlarge further on what I learned from the documents of those days. It is enough to say that one looks with a certain wonder and respect at the Tomlinsons and Mr. Copland King, and one feels one ought to congratulate them on this, among the many other far greater achievements, that they are actually still alive. About the time that the fever carried off Albert Maclaren, and for long after that, there seemed every probability that they who remained would themselves 'go out' in a manner more abrupt.

"On Sunday morning, May 7, I was present at the Eucharist in the Church of St. James, Mukawa. There were 107 communicants, and nearly all the adults of the village were present. The Bishop celebrated and Mr. Tomlinson gave an address. The Mukawan language is terrific; a little word like 'holy' is 'kao'aobaîsiena,' and

that is nothing to some of them. The sermon was quite brief, but the service took at least an hour and a half. The rows and rows of men in loin-cloths filling half the church, kneeling as still as statues, bolt upright upon the shingle floor, and the corresponding rows of women in their grass skirts on the north side, offered a striking example of worship to the beholder. Our launch boys and house boys, Boianaian Christians from a hundred miles further south, filled a row near to me, and worshipped with much devotion; knowing every word and movement of the service by heart, it did not inconvenience them that the Mukawan language bore no resemblance to their own.

" The worship within, in that dimly-lit palm-leaf-covered church, and the bright and friendly greetings all round in the sunshine without when the service was over, carried to the mind a sense of a people loving one another—and their visitors—from the heart fervently, and I remembered that only 500 yards away was Siragi-kapukapuna !

" But things have changed since then. These people, once so fierce and truculent, like nothing better than to prepare pleasant surprises for their benefactors. There was some important building work in hand at Boianai, and some heavy timber had been cut at Waraka six miles up the coast. The Bada observed one evening to a village councillor: ' I must go up in the whale-boat and get these posts to-morrow.' (That would have meant a day's absence and pay for a crew of nine.) The councillor replied, ' Bada, you need not go, the posts are here.' The arrival of the posts was accounted for in this way. It was observed that they would soon be wanted, and that very day thirty of the people, starting at five a.m., without saying a word to their priest had walked to Waraka and dragged the timber down to the sea and into the water. They had walked back in the water waist-deep, using the sea as a

canal, and pushing the timber in front of them. They chose of course a calm day, when the sea could be so used, but the journey included many swims round coral reefs and promontories. For this labour, which had kept them from their gardens more than half the day, the good people were more than rewarded by the delight of their Bada, whom they had saved so much time and expense. An opportunity of doing a service to his Church and his teachers never escapes a New Guinea Christian. Life is now full of these surprises, so different in character from the sensations of twenty years ago.

"On Sunday, May 14, there was a Eucharist with hymns at seven a.m., the Bishop celebrating, and the church was quite full. The epistle and gospel were read in Wedauan, the rest of the liturgy in Ubir. Besides Mr. Fisher, few persons in the Mission speak the latter language. The work of Mr. Money upon it was of the greatest value, but the Scriptures have not yet been extensively translated into it. The Bishop, though he prefers to preach in Wedauan, reads the liturgy in many languages, but I noticed that he was up late on Saturday night, May 13, familiarizing himself with it in Ubir, which, next to Binandere, is the most difficult of the languages.

"A very notable event of that Sunday was the Baptism of 112 persons, which began at about eleven a.m. We made our way to the Kamaban Creek, which enters the sea a quarter of a mile from the Mission house. The catechumens, the heathen, two priests and their attendants, and Miss Gertrude Robson crossed over by a bridge to the further side. The Bishop, the native Christians, about 250 of them, and the rest of us remained on the near side. Behind the catechumens there was a background of jungle—mangroves, pandanus, ferns, and a tangle of vines, with their long depending ropes and graceful catenaries, and more distant palms beyond. The two priests, Fisher and Gill,

stood nearly waist-deep in the stream with their attendants. When the service began the deepest hush fell upon the assembly. When the moment for the Baptism arrived the catechumens were called by their native names by one of the readers assisting, and when called waded into the stream up to one of the two priests. A few at the beginning were baptized by affusion—water being poured on the forehead from a shell—but the majority by immersion. These latter knelt in the water and were plunged once beneath it while the formula was recited. After being signed with the Cross they passed on and slowly made the passage of the stream, fifty yards wide at its mouth and flowing fast from recent rains, its broad bosom marked with swirls and eddies. It was not quite strong enough to carry them off their feet, though some preferred to walk out towards the bar, where its force slackened. The adults were breast-deep, and the smaller candidates were in up to the shoulders, and all came over slowly through the sweeping volume of water to our landing. Four, five and even six were sometimes strung out between our shore and the place where the baptisms were proceeding. There was something very impressive about this little procession, continuing, as it did, with its personnel always renewed, for about an hour. What, one asked oneself, were the thoughts of these newly acknowledged 'sons of God' as they 'came up out of the water'? Surely to them, too, 'the heavens were opened,' and they experienced a new and heartfelt joy, and a sense of their nearness and dearness to God exalting them.

"We watched them passing over, those strong, lithe, virile figures, freed from the dark inheritance of a past out of which loom melancholy shapes of evil, entering now upon their new and blest condition, issuing, as it were, out of their native jungle with its wild and terrible memories, crossing the mystic flood, and presently stand-

ing among their Christian brethren. Nature seemed to be offering her choicest strength—the high spirit and the splendid physical energy of the children of this romantic land to be sanctified and devoted to the service of Christ.

"When we arrived at Boianai on May 5 the priest in charge was still engaged in leisure moments in entering up, in various books, the baptisms which had taken place at his station on Palm Sunday, April 17. There had been 130 persons baptized on that day, many of them old men and women who had held back from entering the catechumenate for fifteen years. On Communion days no one speaks until after the celebration is over, and the church flag remains hoisted for the day. On these days also the servers are allowed to wear the crucifixes which are given them when admitted to their office. These customs, simple but expressive, mark what the people genuinely feel as to the pre-eminence of these days. There are twenty-three servers. Their names are written on two cardboard discs, twelve on one and eleven on the other. These are fixed behind a card that has two oblong slits in it, allowing two names to appear at a time. Thus are shown the names of servers for any day. After any two boys have served together there will be 131 other pairs going through the whole series of possible permutations by the contrivance of turning the discs, until that pair comes round again, when the cycle is complete. The servers never miss their turn, and they do all their work without being reminded. They tell from the kalendar what coloured vestments to put out; they know even from the number at preparation whether one or two chalices will be needed. When the priest walks into church everything is ready. Boianai and Vuruwara have their Eucharist on alternate Sundays. From the village where there is no service sixty or seventy people usually walk the two and a

half miles to the other, making the journey in absolute silence.

"It is right that one part of the Church should rejoice in the grace manifest in another part, and take example by their devotion, or indeed I should hesitate to attempt to describe how these people worship. For the seven a.m. Eucharist the church fills slowly; some are there praying, as motionless as statues, for half an hour before the service begins. I can only say that the expression of joyful expectation on their faces is one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen. The sonorous and musical Wedauan language seems to provide exactly the medium that is required for worship. The native ritual, like all the rest of their religion, is spontaneous, never stereotyped; it has great variety. It is a moving thing to see row after row of nobly built, athletic men and lads formed after the most perfect mould of physical beauty approaching the altar. Some genuflect as they come up the aisles, others bow their heads; some prostrate themselves before Communion or after, or both; there is evidently no standard use, each does what his own devotion prompts him to. To watch a youth with limbs that would do credit to an Apollo, with a torso and shoulders that would send a sculptor into ecstasies, his colour a rich, shining chocolate-brown, his dress a simple loin-cloth, his expression one of rapt spiritual calm—to watch such an one as he prostrates himself after his communion suggests many things: the consecration of the perfection of physical life to holy purposes, the oblation of soul and body as a living sacrifice for whatever Christ needs of him. Neither, I think, does he fail to perform what his worship promises. The moment he comes out of church he will be setting out on some Christian errand. He will make, perhaps, one of a party going to Baiwapa, or Vidia, or Gourapu, Gau, Gadoa, or Manisia—six hours' scrambling up a mountain gorge

that last—in company with one of the lay-readers he will go to help in a service at one of these places. For not one of the outlying villages that is inside the six hours' radius is allowed to go without its service on Sunday, and the official reader runs no risk of a solitary mission."

The Bishop concludes: "Who shall say what New Guinea may not become if we rise to our duty? It is a land of visions and dreams, of wild splendour, of mountains and entrancing beauty, of primeval forests. Horrors of bloodshed and human ferocity have haunted its jungle glades and loaded it with the curse of Cain. Black and ghoulish past traditions and their present grim survivals hold many of its people in bondage, but when the ugly spell is broken and its fear retreats, a fascinating, childlike human playfulness fills the scene, and the actual daily increasing miracles of grace cause men to bow their heads. Yes, there is New Guinea, with its amazing anthropological riddles, its trackless philological labyrinths, its inexhaustible treasures—botanical, reptilian, and entomological, its vivid, fantastic, yet graceful and alluring folk-lore, its inscrutable tangle of spiritualistic beliefs and animistic legends, and its now emerging glory of Christianity pure and undefiled; and what influence, with all this store of wonder, has it exercised on the mind of Australia? It was in a dull material mood of political expediency—territorial expansion, imperial prestige, and all the rest of it—that we assumed control of this astonishing possession. We are not totally ignorant and unconcerned about it. But so little, even now, does it impress our slow imagination that it becomes the duty of even the passing visitor to try and record some of the impressions of so golden, romantic, entrancing a fairyland, where the human race has hardly left its cradle, and is waiting to know whether its still potential though much imperilled paradise is to be miser-

ably denied and lost or gloriously affirmed and regained. God help the Church in Australia to make the right answer !"

It should be added that four natives of New Guinea have now been ordained deacons, and that four more are preparing for the diaconate and one for the priesthood.

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